

NAVY NEWS

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'THE RN AT ITS BEST'

LIVERPOOL HOME FROM LIBYA

HEROES ALL

PARADES HONOUR MARINES



PO(ACMN) Adam Mayes gives the signal to his fellow aircrew as 771 Naval Air Squadron carry out rescue drills in Falmouth Harbour in preparation for the Atlantic's winter storms. See page 39 for details.

Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Culdrose

ACES HIGH





● Flight Commander Lt Phil Barron holds his sons Samuel, two, and Thomas, three, as the Lynx returns to RNAS Yeovilton



● Defence Secretary Philip Hammond talks with Liverpool's gunnery officer Lt Rubin Nash



● A very low-key welcome for PO Simon Hawthorn and (below) sailors dash down the gangways to greet their families again



Sailors from the v

IT WAS one of those mornings when the weather gods never lift their gloomy veil which bathes everything in rather depressing shades of grey.

A day when the jets of water from the yellow and black tugs almost merge with the sky as soon as they leave the hoses.

A day when the murk muffles the salute fired by the small ceremonial gun on the ship's upper deck – and the gunners at Fort Blockhouse respond in kind.

Yet to ET Jonathan Sterling Roman it meant catching up on the first five months of his daughter's life.

To Lt Rubin Nash it meant a chance to belatedly tie the knot.

To Surg Lt John Reilly it meant he could finally sleep – properly.

To LET Jon Patton it meant time to reflect on what had been achieved.

And to every one of the 250 men and women aboard it meant a last chance to bask in the glory of deeds done and, more importantly, to embrace loved ones, in some cases for the first time for more than seven months.

Hailed as one of the biggest homecomings since the Falklands – there were an estimated 1,000 friends and family waiting on South Railway Jetty in Portsmouth Naval Base – HMS Liverpool completed her Libya mission in style on the first Monday of November.

She had sailed almost in secret, slipping out of Portsmouth Harbour at the end of March, her plans for the year thrown up in the air by the growing crisis in Libya.

Her task: to support NATO's fledgling Operation Unified Protector, enforcing an arms embargo imposed on the Gaddafi regime to stop weapons reaching government troops and help to direct the myriad of NATO aircraft enforcing the No-Fly Zone and conducting strike missions.

She was there almost at the very beginning. She was certainly there at the end.

More observant viewers of rolling news might have spotted an indistinct grey blur on the horizon as reporters broadcast news of the fall of Sirte.

That was HMS Liverpool. And that evening, as the Mediterranean night blanketed the Gulf of Sirte in darkness, her ship's company were treated to a magnificent impromptu firework display. The Libyan people were celebrating.

Indeed the closing weeks of the campaign, said Liverpool's Commanding Officer Cdr Colin Williams, had at times been "one big thank-you".

His destroyer was regularly approached by Libyan ships

and boats who simply wanted to offer their gratitude.

Indeed, Liverpool was asked to escort the Al Hani, flagship of the Free Libyan Forces, into Tripoli shortly after the capital's fall. Her upper decks were packed with troops, her sides covered with Free Libya flags and banners.

"They've invited us back in a year's time – and that brought home the success of what we'd achieved," Cdr Williams added.

This of course, was not some triumphant procession, a litany of banner parades and firework displays.

For almost her entire time away, the veteran destroyer was in the line of fire.

If you need reminding of that fact, take a trip to the heads. On almost every cubicle door there are photographs of Gaddafi's former military machine: missile launchers, rocket batteries, gunboats, aircraft.

Not that the 250-strong ship's company particularly need reminding that they've been in a war: Liverpool was the first British warship to be fired at deliberately since the Falklands conflict 30 years ago.

The ship's company spent most of their time in defence watches – six hours on duty, six hours off – and spent 81 hours at action stations when Liverpool was engaged by enemy guns, or threatened with being engaged. Not once on the ten occasions that Gaddafi's guns and rocket batteries fired at the ship was the destroyer seriously threatened – but crew said even when rounds fell 600 metres short of the ship, they could feel the vibrations of the impact through the hull.

If the fire from Gaddafi's guns was deliberate but ineffective, the response from the Crazy Red Chicken – or just 'Crazy Red', nicknames drawn from the Liver bird on the destroyer's badge – was deliberate, accurate, potent.

She responded with more than 200 rounds from her main gun to silence pro-Gaddafi gun batteries and stop convoys in their tracks.

"You look at the radar screen and see something coming towards you – there's a heady rush," said Lt Rubin Nash, Liverpool's gunnery officer.

"There's also a bit of anger: how dare they shoot at us."

He's particularly proud of the speed and effectiveness of his team firing one particularly heavy and accurate barrage.

Fifty-four shells left the barrel of the main 4.5in gun in 26 minutes, landing on or around two dozen vehicles closing in on the city of Misrata. Two were smashed, half a dozen more damaged and the rest scattered; the advance ground to a halt.

Much as we like heaping praise on Liverpool for her achievements, and

her accuracy with her main gun, the effect of those 4.5in shells isn't down entirely to the efficacy of the ops room team.

Some 22,000 feet over the Gulf of Sirte, the Royal Navy's dedicated 'spotters' were picking out targets for NATO warships to pummel.

The men of 148 Meitila Commando Forward Observation Battery Royal Artillery – a mix of soldiers and sailors – were responsible for more than 550 rounds of high explosive accurately crashing down on Gaddafi's military machine.

Working in Allied aircraft high above the battlefield, the observers controlled gunfire from Liverpool, plus Iron Duke and Sutherland when the destroyer was undergoing maintenance in mid-summer, and other NATO ships in more than 60 actions during more than 500 hours of missions over Libya.

"The challenges were immense," said Royal Navy Commando and Afghanistan veteran Lt Nick Harper.

"We were working with NATO air crews and unfamiliar equipment to target suitable units on the ground."

"Working with the ships was extremely impressive – they responded immediately to the fire orders and the naval gunfire was accurate and highly-effective."

As well as directing the gunfire, the spotters are all qualified forward air controllers. Their unrivalled overhead view of the battlefield allowed them to locate targets for aircraft to attack and to pass on real-time information to headquarters.

Meanwhile at sea...

In addition to the spotters, the Royal Navy provided Naval Gunfire Liaison Officers to ships on the gunline – Territorial Army officers who are employed by the Senior Service and can arrive by parachute if required (but not in this case) to co-ordinate the action on the surface.

"The ships were fully ready at action stations as we raced into the coast on the orders of the airborne spotters," said Maj Johnny Gray, one of half a dozen liaison officers deployed on the Libya mission.

"On at least one occasion, we recorded the fall of hostile fire into the water – luckily short of us – as we fired."

"My job was exciting, doing the very work that I've trained for on many exercises. It was fascinating seeing the sky lit up by the battle and the British star shells bursting."

Liverpool was originally due to sail with the Cougar task group to the Mediterranean and Middle East on exercises.

Instead, she left Portsmouth earlier than planned – and arrived home three months later than originally scheduled.

World events meant her programme changed repeatedly – the ship's company dubbed the uncertainty 'the Libya syndrome' and all singled out one 38-day stint at sea in defence watches as particularly tiring.

Indeed a long rest was on the minds of most of the ship's company as the destroyer returned.

"I hated my bed on the first night aboard and I hated it on the last. I'm just going to sleep now I'm home," said Surg Lt John Reilly, Liverpool's medical officer.

"You can change my name to Rip van Reilly."

ET(WE) Jonathan Sterling Roman experienced the first few days in the life of his daughter Maliyah with his girlfriend Maria Fletcher.

The junior rating was one of four dads who got home in time to see new additions to their families.

"When the time came to leave it was heartbreaking – really hard to describe. I've missed five months of her life that I'll never get back," said Jonathan.

"But you have to do your duty. You are doing something for a good reason and this is what we joined up for."

Not so fortunate was Lt Nash who twice had to cancel his wedding to fiancée Emma Pinder, first in August, then in October (his expertise as Liverpool's gunnery officer was deemed indispensable).

"We seriously looked at getting married on board – but apparently it's not been legal since 1948..."

He'll now be tying the knot in the spring – world events allowing.

And when spring comes, the ship he has served in since March will be taking her final curtain call.



War returning

After trials, a spot of training with rookie Lynx helicopter crews, winter exercises in the Arctic, and a farewell visit to her namesake city, the venerable destroyer is due to decommission. She leaves the Navy, says Cdr Williams, "having played a very good tune on her fiddle."

He continued: "She has done a sterling job. It's sad to see a ship with as much heart as her leave service. But it's time for her to go."

She goes with her ship's company convinced that they have "made a difference" – a phrase used repeatedly – on Liverpool's final deployment.

"You are under no illusions about what you are doing – you are making the world a better place for those less fortunate. It sounds a bit dramatic," said CPO Stuart Geary.

Twenty-eight-year-old LCH Nicola Stirzaker from Bradford added: "It's been a long year but a good year."

"I've never done something as big as this. When we heard that Gaddafi had gone you knew that you'd made a big difference."

Working in the gunbay meant LET(WE) Jon Paxton was particularly busy at times.

"It still doesn't feel real now – but it was the real deal," said the 27-year-old from Arbroath.

"Something needed to be done. We feel we've played a part, even if it's a small one. We like to think we've made a difference."

And so, understandably, Liverpool's ship's company are filled with "a sense of pride and satisfaction at a job well done", says Cdr Williams.

"You can see sailors grinning from ear to ear. We are very proud of what we have done. Keeping people motivated has not been difficult – they could see the difference we were making."

For pilot Lt Al Crawford, Imprinted on his memory is the sight of a former Gaddafi warship in the hands of Free Libyan Forces.

"Everyone was waving," he said. "You think: These guys are in control of their country – it was very rewarding."

The ship's flight was denied much of the pomp and ceremony of Liverpool's homecoming – after two rapid passes of Portsmouth Harbour and the Lynx's trademark 'nod' in front of the waiting families, the helicopter raced westwards and home.

There may not have been 1,000 people waiting for them,

but don't believe that the welcome for the nimble aircraft and its crew was any less heartfelt.

As on the jetty in Portsmouth, 100 miles away at RNAS Yeovilton the families of 217 Flight were waiting expectantly – as were most personnel from their parent 815 Naval Air Squadron who were not on deployment.

Youngsters Thomas and Samuel Barron couldn't wait for dad, flight commander and observer Lt Phil Barron to set down on the Somerset runway and raced across the concrete when the helicopter's rotors finally stopped turning.

The Lynx he commanded flew more than 250 hours on Unified Protector duties, called upon to detect small boats potentially carrying mines to block ports in rebel hands – notably the besieged city of Misrata – and also helped call in fire missions for the destroyer's main 4.5in gun by picking out targets ashore. In doing so, the Lynx came under fire from shore-based enemy artillery.

Despite such dangers, punishing Mediterranean temperatures during the high summer, and a very demanding workrate, 217 Flight achieved an almost-unheard of availability rate of 94 per cent thanks to Herculean efforts by the ground crew, assisted when needed by colleagues back at base in Yeovilton.

"The unknown was the biggest challenge – we were working mainly at night because they were using the cover of darkness for their activities," said 31-year-old Lt Barron from Ilchester, who was greeted by his wife Jennifer as well their two sons.

"We came under fire a few times – you could feel the explosion of the rounds, mainly artillery, but we were not hit."

The Flight's last act of this landmark deployment was to deliver two VVIPs to Liverpool for her homecoming – proof of the high regard in which the destroyer's actions are held.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond – paying his first visit to the Navy since taking office – and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope joined the ship for the final couple of hours of her deployment.

Most of the ship's company crammed into her compact hangar, where Mr Hammond told them they could be proud of playing "a vital role" in helping the Libyan people "to rid themselves of a tyrant and end a dictatorship that has lasted for 40 years."

"Your bravery and

professionalism is an inspiration to us all."

"We are grateful to you and proud of you. You have demonstrated the power of the Royal Navy. On behalf of the whole nation: thank you for what you have done."

Admiral Stanhope said the destroyer's actions – and those of the 15 other British warships and auxiliaries which have played smaller or larger roles in the Libyan mission – had "raised the public's view of what the Navy is about".

The accomplishments of the Naval Service since Libya was engulfed in civil war earlier this year include:

- the evacuation of nearly 500 civilians from eastern Libya;
- firing the first shots of the NATO campaign – Tomahawk missiles launched from submarine HMS Triumph;
- clearing mines from Misrata and Tobruk;
- pounding enemy positions and vehicles;
- choreographing the aerial campaign using the operations room on HMS Liverpool;
- launching helicopter strikes from HMS Ocean;
- assisting the nascent Free Libyan Forces.

"Much of what the Navy does is below the horizon," Admiral Stanhope said.

"We go away, do our thing and not many people know about it."

"I hope that the Libya operations have shown what the Navy does. There has been some good coverage of its achievements and that has meant it has raised the public's view of what the Navy is about."

HMS Liverpool has, arguably, been linked with operations off Libya more than any other British vessel.

"Liverpool has been the ship of the moment," says Cdr Williams emphatically.

"We arrived at the beginning and left at the end, we've seen the difference we made to the people of Libya."

He continued: "We were under attack, under constant threat of attack, and that's not easy – it's stressful and tiring, but we reacted calmly, professionally, and we've all come home safely."

And for the men and women of HMS Liverpool, the traditional naval words of praise for a job well done: Bravo Zulu.

"Thank you for all you have done," the First Sea Lord told the ship's company.

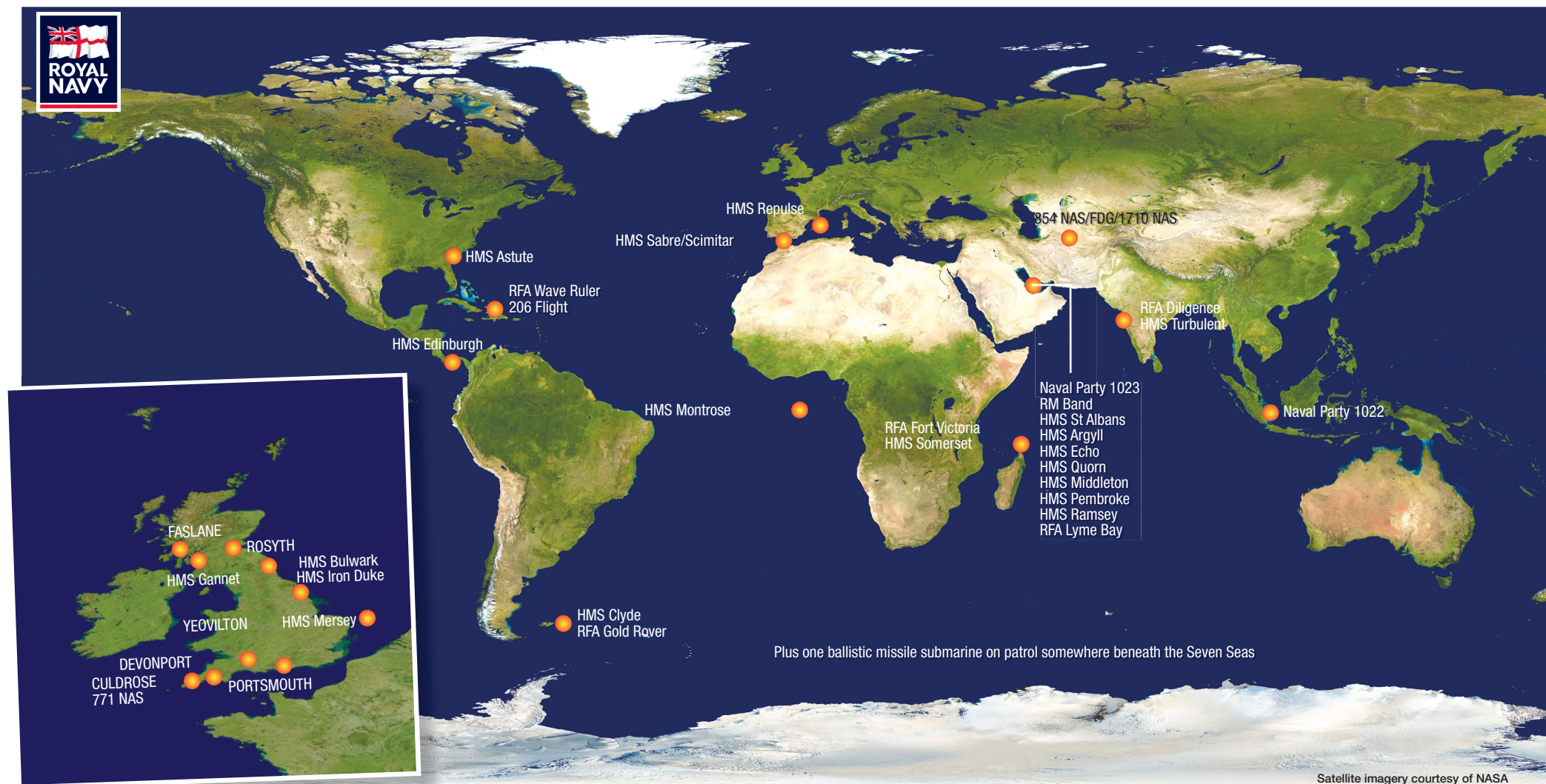
"You have displayed the Royal Navy at its very best."



● Sailors on minehunter HMS Brocklesby – which herself played a key role in events at Misrata – salute Liverpool as she enters Portsmouth Harbour and (below) the destroyer's Commanding Officer Cdr Colin Williams hugs his daughters Isabella and Hermione and his wife Sarah



pictures: la(photos) nicky wilson, jay allen, darby allen, gaz weatherston



Fleet Focus

IT'S been a month of heartwarming homecomings as sailors and Royal Marines returned *en masse* from two bitter conflicts.

HMS Liverpool enjoyed one of the biggest welcomes back since the Falklands when her seven-month stint off Libya came to an end (see pages 2-3). With Operation Ellamy now officially concluded, her erstwhile companion **HMS Bangor** is slowly making her way home after clearing unexploded ordnance (see page 15).

Meanwhile home from Helmand are **3 Commando Brigade**, **45** and **42 Commandos**, **30 Commando Information Exploitation Group**, **29 Commando Regiment RA**, **Commando Logistic Regiment**, **24 Commando Engineer Regiment**, all of whom have taken part in a series of homecoming parades and services of thanksgiving in the West Country and in London (see pages 10-11).

Also back from Camp Bastion – lock, stock and barrel – are the **Commando Helicopter Force** whose Jungly Sea Kings were carefully stowed for the flight home (see page 15).

Despite the return of the Junglies and 3 Commando Brigade, the Navy's – and nation's – mission in Afghanistan goes on; the Bagger Sea Kings of **854 NAS** continue to make inroads into the insurgency by helping ground troops to bag the bad guys (see right).

Tomorrow's technology has almost become today's as three 'big ticket' projects – Lynx Wildcat, the Type 45 destroyer and Astute-class submarine – pass crucial milestones.

The **Wildcat** made her debut at sea, touching down on the deck of RFA Argus off Portland (see page 16).

The first Type 45, **HMS Daring**, is now ready to deploy – and will do so in a matter of weeks (see page 7), while **HMS Astute** successfully fired a Tomahawk cruise missile at a US range in the Gulf of Mexico (see page 5) in the middle of five months of extensive trials across the Pond.

HMS Triumph fired several salvos of Tomahawks during the opening stages of the Libyan campaign. She's back at sea again, this time on a more typical – and protracted – T-boat patrol (see right).

And talking of protracted T-boat patrols, **HMS Turbulent** is in the closing weeks of her final deployment. She has been exercising with **RFA Diligence** at annual Anglo-Indian war games off Goa (see page 16).

Elsewhere east of Suez, **HMS Argyll** relieved her sister **HMS St Albans** on Gulf patrol duties and promptly took part in high-profile independence and liberation commemorations in Kuwait (see page 14).

Also on the commemorative, sailors and Royal Marines paused to reflect on past and present sacrifices by the men and women of the Naval Service both at home and abroad; we round up the many November ceremonies on page 22.

HMS Edinburgh sailed through two canals – one natural (Patagonian), one man-made (Panama) – as her South Atlantic/Pacific deployment drew to a close (see page 17).

In home waters, **HMS Iron Duke** is enjoying a circumnavigation of the UK on navigation training, but broke off for a high-profile visit to her affiliated city of Hull (see page 32), while further up the east coast flagship **HMS Bulwark** berthed on the Tyne to allow her ship's company to visit Durham (see page 10).

HMS Illustrious is training intensively to be the nation's on-call helicopter carrier in the new year (see page 8) so she can take over the mantle from **HMS Ocean**, whose actions this year have been praised by the country's most senior officer, Chief of Defence Staff General Sir David Richards (see page 6).



Bags of success

BAGGER Sea Kings have helped to stop insurgents in Afghanistan building more than 1,500 homemade bombs.

That's just one headline figure from a summer and autumn of success as 'eyes in the sky' Sea Kings used their cutting-edge radar to track insurgents so ground troops could pounce.

Over the past five months more than seven tonnes of explosives have been captured, and a similar amount of drugs – worth well over £10m on the streets of the UK – thanks to the helicopters of 854 Naval Air Squadron.

Commanders in theatre say the Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control – to give the Baggers their official title – are playing "a pivotal role".

The helicopters, based at Camp Bastion, are flying up to 50 hours a week, using specialist radar in a giant sack on the side of the Sea King – which gives the squadrons their 'Bagger' nickname – to follow the movements of insurgents thousands of feet below on the ground.

In the past fortnight alone the squadron – which comprises fewer than 50 personnel in Helmand – has directed troops on to three men travelling in a truck which was carrying 570kg of opium with a street value of £1m, while £250,000 of heroin was found on another vehicle.

But the biggest boost to the concerted effort to strangle the insurgency however comes in the amount of explosives that have fallen into the hands of friendly forces thanks to the Sea Kings, known as 'cloudwalkers' by Afghans.

The summer haul totals 7.2 tonnes of explosives – enough to produce more than 1,500 10lb small improvised explosive devices which have killed and maimed thousands of British, Allied and Afghan troops – and Afghan civilians.

In addition to these successes, the past two weeks have also seen the helicopters pass on 70 intelligence tip-offs to ground troops to follow up.

"Individually, these 'busts' are quite small, but collectively, our small force is making a very big difference," said Cdr Pat Douglas, Commander Maritime Sea King Force.

"We may be only operating over Helmand and environs but the impact of what we do spreads across the entire country.

"Every single time a vehicle we've tracked is stopped and drugs or explosives are found by ground forces, we are making things a percentage safer for Afghan civilians and the forces there who are protecting them."

The Baggers have been in Afghanistan since May 2009, with 854 and her sister squadron from RNAS Culdrose, 857 NAS, taking it in turns to constantly monitor insurgent activity.

Although their missions are hundreds or thousands of feet above Helmand and the helicopters are based many miles from the scene of the various interdiction operations, Allied troops are very quick to pass on their gratitude for the intelligence the Baggers provide.

"We're told quite quickly the outcome of our actions and the feedback we get is that we're making a difference, which has a big effect on morale – really satisfying," said Cdr Douglas.

Crews initially used their sorties over Helmand to build up their knowledge and experience of each area and to understand life on the ground, day-to-day traffic and seasonal movements (such as harvest gathering).

With two and a half years' experience under their belt, Cdr Douglas says his men and women are well attuned and familiar with their operating areas, making it easier for them to spot the unusual.

"Operations now are more focused, more targeted and much more effective because we know the ground – there's a lot of knowledge in the squadrons," Cdr Douglas adds.

"We are on a campaign footing. We will continue to do the job out there as long as we are needed – we stay until our job is done."

To sea in Triumph again

UNDER cover of darkness hunter-killer submarine HMS Triumph has slipped out of her home port once again – this time on a deployment of more than seven months.

The nuclear submarine, which fired the very first shots of Operation Ellamy – the British codename for our involvement in the NATO mission in Libya – will conduct operations in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Arabian Seas and the Indian Ocean.

When she returns home to Devonport next year she'll have been away for 13 of the previous 17 months – typical of the demands placed on the Trafalgar-class community presently: HMS Tireless completed a ten-month deployment in the spring while HMS Turbulent is away on a equally-lengthy patrol.

In Triumph's case, she carried out two stints on Operation Ellamy, conducting numerous Tomahawk missile strikes at targets in Libya, and spent months providing covert intelligence for NATO.

More recently she tested her operational readiness with the rigours of the Submarine Command Course – known throughout the Silent Service as 'Perisher' – assessing the abilities of prospective submarine commanders.

After a brief period alongside for re-supply, Triumph departed Devonport by night.

"I am very proud of the achievements of my ship's company over the past year but the relentless demands placed on our submarine force are continuing with this latest deployment for which we are very well equipped, maintained and trained," said her Commanding Officer Cdr Rob Dunn.

While the deployment will be taxing on the crew, careful rotation throughout the deployment will allow many of them to take leave and professional courses while occasional port visits will allow material repairs, replenishment of vital stores and some relaxation for the remainder.



Yachtsman plucked from North Sea

THE alertness and keen eye of a sailor on the bridge of HMS Mersey helped save the life of a Dutch yachtsman after fire ravaged his boat off the Norfolk coast.

Floating in a partially-inflated and unlit life raft, some two miles from the blazing hulk of his yacht Pimpernel, the sailor was spotted by Mid Phillip Fordham as he scanned the North Sea using night vision goggles.

The junior officer spotted a glint in the distance and the fishery protection ship's two sea boats were immediately sent to the spot with first aiders aboard.

They found the raft, rescued the Dutchman, gave him blankets and first aid and brought him back to the Portsmouth-based ship, where he was found to be cold and in a state of shock, but otherwise unhurt.

Mersey had been carrying out a routine fishery patrol off Great Yarmouth when she picked up a frantic mayday call from the yacht as night fell on the North Sea.

"Information was limited – the only known facts were that the vessel was on fire and that it was possibly in the area," said Lt Chris Humphreys.

The warship and other vessels immediately began a search of the North Sea. Mersey's firefighters and first aid team prepared to deal with the blaze and any casualties, but the ship's company were becoming increasingly concerned for the fate of the Pimpernel when nothing more was heard from her.

What was left of the boat was found around 30 miles off the coast – and the sight was alarming.

"The scale of the blaze was clear – flames rose metres in the air and explosions were visible from a number of miles away," said Lt Humphreys.

"Once on the scene, it was clear that the yacht had been destroyed. Flaming wreckage remained on the surface, but the focus for the ship turned to searching for survivors."

When the sole crewman was found and brought back to HMS Mersey, he told the crew that he'd been sailing from Lowestoft to his native Netherlands when the fire took hold and he was forced to abandon the Pimpernel.

He was subsequently winched up by a Coastguard helicopter and flown to hospital in Great Yarmouth.

"I'm immensely proud of how my ship's company responded to this distress call in challenging conditions and pleased that we were able to rescue the casualty and render first aid," said Lt Cdr Mark Anderson, Mersey's CO.

"The yachtsman was in a perilous situation – and understandably in a state of shock – but should make a full recovery."

Pictures: PO(Phot) Paul Punter, FRPU East



Astute comes of age

UNDER the gleam of the still potent autumn sun, Britain's most advanced boat sails from one of the world's largest submarine bases to test her ultimate weapon.

HMS Astute left the US Navy's Kings Bay yard – the size of Bradford, or 50 times bigger than Portsmouth Naval Base – to fire her Tomahawk missile system for the first time.

The £1bn hunter-killer boat – successor to the stalwart Trafalgar-class submarines – made for missile ranges in the Gulf of Mexico, where she took a giant step along the road to operational readiness.

And when the time came, the 1,300kg cruise missile left Astute's launch tube and streaked into the sky at up to 550mph (885kph).

"This first-of-class firing proves that Astute is a truly capable submarine," said Astute's Commanding Officer, Cdr Iain Breckenridge.

"It means that the United Kingdom's Submarine Service will be able to provide the UK's strike capability for many years to come."

Indeed Astute and her six planned sisters (to date five of a class of seven nuclear-powered boats have been formally laid down or built) are due to serve under the White Ensign until around 2050.

As the first boat in the class, Astute's trials programme is particularly gruelling – more than two years and counting so far.

But with the Faslane-based boat

being subjected to batteries of exacting trials, her sisters should complete their tests in one quarter of the time.

The design and build of Astute-class submarines has been described as a more technically challenging project than building the Space Shuttle, and last year Rear Admiral Simon Lister, Director of Submarines, likened Astute to a 7,000-tonne Swiss watch, as she was built to such exacting standards and fine tolerances.

The boats have the largest weapon-carrying capacity of any Royal Navy attack submarine – a combination of up to 38 Tomahawk missiles and Spearfish torpedoes.

In the case of the former – a battle-proven weapon used extensively by the Silent Service over the past decade in conflicts in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and, most recently, Libya – it can strike targets at a range of more than 1,000 miles with pinpoint accuracy.

Even though the Astute-class submarines will fire the same weapons as their predecessors, the boats have been designed with modern operations in mind, rather than the Cold War requirements that shaped the Swiftsure and Trafalgar classes.

As such they are vastly different in shape, size, capacity and capability.

"The most noticeable difference for the ship's company is that for the first time everyone has their own bunk," said Cdr Breckenridge.



"Design changes that will make an operational difference include the fact that we have a reactor that will never need to be refuelled in the boat's 25-year life."

"We have optronic masts instead of traditional periscopes, which means we have saved lots of space in the control room as well as having the benefit of digital cameras instead of traditional optical periscopes."

"We also no longer have to

use red lighting which improves the comfort for the ship's company."

His submarine will continue her trials in the USA until the early spring – including warm water trials and making use of the unique ranges at the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center at Andros Island in the Bahamas – before returning to the UK for further training before her first operational deployment.

She is due to be ready for front-line duties from the end of 2012.

Clyde's four for good

THE Navy's constant presence in the Falklands has celebrated four years patrolling the remote South Atlantic islands.

HMS Clyde paused to take a break from her normal duties for a spot of cake on the flight deck – with a special guest in attendance to perform the cutting honours.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery was on hand as part of a visit to RN personnel in the region and donned foulies (as did the rest of the ship's company) for the birthday 'party' on a typical Falklands day (chilly, blustery), set against a typical Falklands backdrop (bleak).

If the weather wasn't especially nice, the cake, baked by CH Mark Winnall was a winner... as was LS(CIS) Michael 'Baz' Hearn, who received a medal for 15 years' service and good conduct from the admiral.

Clyde arrived in the South Atlantic in late September 2007, replacing HMS Dumbarton Castle, one of two Castle-class vessels which had taken it in turns to patrol these waters for a quarter of a century.

Unlike those two Castle-class ships, which spent around three years at a time in the Southern Hemisphere, Clyde – an extended version of the Fishery Protection Ships found around the UK daily – does not return home (officially she comes under the Portsmouth Flotilla, although East Cove Military

Port is her typical base).

As flight crews change, infantry regiments hand over to the next group of soldiers and aircraft types come and go, Clyde has remained a constant presence since 2007.

During that time she's conducted countless patrols, visited most of the settlements of West (the less populous) and East Falkland, providing a permanent reassurance to islanders.

To maintain that permanent presence, the ship's company of 42 rotates every six months.

The rotation and the fact that the 'small ship' community often like to stick together means some of those 42 sailors have been here before.

ET(ME) Craig Wiggins is on his third spell on Clyde; he and shipmate LS Hearn brought the ship out of build in Portsmouth (and Baz also completed a South Atlantic deployment in Dumbarton Castle), while PO(AH) Mark Brook joined the ship shortly afterwards on aviation trials.

All three were on the inaugural deployment down south and were aboard four years later for the anniversary.

For PO Brook, who's in charge of the flight deck, the attachment to the islands is particularly strong. He's engaged to Emma from Stanley, the Falklands' capital, and the two tie the knot next year.



THE ROYAL NAVAL BENEVOLENT TRUST

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Men and women in the Royal Marines and Royal Navy serve their country, often at times of danger: the RNBT serves them and their families, at times of need, throughout their lives. Your donations help us to help them.

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Montrose goes south

ON a wind and rain-lashed Devil's Point, families waved farewell to the good ship Montrose, setting sail on a 6½-month deployment.

The weather was a foretaste of what the Devonport-based frigate is likely to encounter as she takes up her duties as Atlantic Patrol Ship (South).

As well as a hearty turn out from loved ones in Plymouth, the 180 sailors aboard were treated to the skirl of bagpipes with a lone piper at Devil's Point providing a fitting nod to the Type 23 frigate's proud links with Scotland.

It's certainly very different and rather cooler than the ship's last tour of duty – the ship returned from a successful counter-piracy deployment east of Suez ten months ago; she proved to be a pirate-buster *par excellence*.

Since returning to the West Country she's undergone extensive maintenance and an intensive period of Operational Sea Training to prepare her for the six-plus months away from home.

"Exactly a year ago, Montrose was patrolling the key shipping routes in the Somali Basin and Horn of Africa, and in fact one of our most significant counter-piracy successes took place on this day last year," said her CO Cdr Jonathan Lett.

"Fast forward 12 months, and we are now ready to do whatever is asked of us in the South Atlantic, providing a reassuring presence in the region and working hard to protect British interests.

"This deployment has been eagerly anticipated for some time, and every member of my team is well prepared and very well trained for the potential challenges ahead."

'The name of Ocean is held in high regard...'

BRITAIN'S most senior military commander praised the men and women of the nation's biggest warship, HMS Ocean, for their part in the mission off Libya.

General Sir David Richards, Chief of the Defence Staff, visited the helicopter assault ship – which served as the launchpad for 49 missions by Apache gunships – to pass on his personal gratitude.

Addressing personnel on the ship's flight deck (pictured right by LA(Phot) Guy Pool), General Richards said: "I have a lot of history with this fine ship and so I'm really glad to have had the opportunity to visit you.

"What you did in Libya and the way you have responded over the last few months have been in the best traditions of the Service; not only have you done great work operationally but you have broken new barriers professionally, particularly with the Apache.

"The name of HMS Ocean is held in high regard back in the UK and you should be proud, and deservedly so, of what you have achieved."

During the operation in support of the UN Security Council Resolution, the Apache attack helicopters embarked on HMS Ocean complemented the RAF Tornado and Typhoon aircraft, delivering additional precision-strike capability.

The Apaches of 656 Squadron

Army Air Corps – deploying at sea for the first time – carried out a string of highly-effective missions inside Libya, hitting military vehicles, installations and communications equipment.

They were ably assisted by other helicopters embarked on the Mighty O, including Bagger Sea Kings of 857 NAS which cleared a safe path for them in and out of Libya, and Lynx Mk 7s of 847 NAS which provided force protection and logistic support.

Ocean was also home to US Air Force HH60 Pavehawks of 56th Rescue Squadron based at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk; they were on standby for personnel recovery or medical evacuation operations in the event of incidents involving any NATO aircraft or ships.

"I am immensely proud of all of the personnel serving in HMS Ocean," said her CO Capt Andrew Betton.

"Everybody has worked tirelessly since we sailed in April to contribute to our evolving mission, so having the opportunity to brief the Chief of Defence Staff on our recent activity was an honour."

In the four months that HMS Ocean was operating off Libya, the ship spent 87 days at sea, launching Baggers on 99 operational sorties in addition.

Since departing the UK in late April, Ocean has sailed over 23,000 nautical miles and there have been in excess of 2,000 deck landings by a mix of both embarked and visiting aircraft.

Meanwhile, the man who led



the Navy's biggest deployment of 2011 – which included Ocean – says Britain's new task group has passed its first acid test.

Cdre John Kingwell praised the men and women of the Response Force Task Group, which numbered more than half a dozen ships and well over 2,000 personnel, for their work off Libya and beyond.

As Commander UK Task Group (or COMUKTG), he led the force – in addition to Ocean it comprised Albion, Liverpool, Triumph, Sutherland and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Argus and Cardigan Bay, among others, plus elements of numerous Naval Air Squadrons and the Royal Marines of 42 Commando – on Cougar 11.

The deployment had lined up long-planned exercises in the Mediterranean and Middle East over the spring and summer.

Although many of those exercises were carried out – notably in Cyprus, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – the Cougar force split to support operations in Libya.

"I am very proud of all that the Response Force Task Group's sailors, marines, soldiers – let's not forget that the attack helicopters are Army Air Corps – and airmen have achieved and continue to achieve," Cdre Kingwell said.

"The task group proved to be able to operate as singletons or in formation and the lead commando group with its shipping allowed me to offer a range of options in response to unfolding humanitarian events throughout the region.

"Launching attack helicopter strike operations from Ocean proved the ability of the task group to conduct maritime strike operations – both from submarines and now helicopter carriers."

The task group was formed in February out of last year's Defence Review, combining the previous amphibious and carrier strike groups.

The COMUKTG staff comprises personnel from all three Services.

At times during the Cougar deployment and Libya operations, the staff were spread across seven locations, including the flagships of three nations.

"The challenge has been to bring all of this together as one team and I think we can say that Cougar has clearly shown that we've done that," said Cdr Tom Guy, task group Chief-of-Staff.

"We are truly a joint staff, but there is only one of us – our challenge is to maintain our high degree of readiness on an

enduring basis.

"From the day they join to the day they leave, every member of the staff is at 48 hours' notice to deploy. The message is: You don't join the Commander UK Task Group if you want a quiet life."

Which is something Cdre Paddy McAlpine is now discovering as he's just taken over the reins at the COMUKTG headquarters in RM Stonehouse in Plymouth.

"I've enjoyed every moment of my command and it's been a huge honour to have helped establish, and then employ, such an impressive capability," said Cdre Kingwell.

"Although my time as Commander UK Task Group has been relatively short, the Response Force Task Group is now well placed to form the core of the Royal Navy's contribution to the nation's contingent forces."

Entente even more cordiale

THE flagships of the British and French Navies are lined up to work side-by-side next year to demonstrate the progress made between the two Fleets.

The Royal Navy's key deployment of 2012 – which will see the UK Response Force Task Group head to the Mediterranean – is due to join forces with the FS Charles de Gaulle and her carrier battlegroup, an exercise which will be the focal point of co-operation between the two navies next year.

The link up was agreed by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and his French counterpart, *Amiral* Bernard Rogel, who've met twice recently – once in Paris, once at the US Navy-led International Sea Power Symposium on Rhode Island – to formally review progress made since the signing of the UK-France treaty last year.

The two admirals said that operations off Libya this year had demonstrated the significant progress already made in developing cooperation between the two navies.

In addition to the international effort in the Gulf of Sirte, 2011 has seen the Cougar 11 task group work with the French patrol ship FS Commandant Birot, while just last month assault ship HMS Bulwark hosted troops from 2nd Marine Infantry Regiment (2RIMA) for the latest Joint Warrior exercise in North-West Scotland.

In their two recent meetings, Admiral Stanhope and *Amiral* Rogel decided that the major assets of both navies should make "maximum use" of working together as the two navies look to create a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force by the mid-decade – and that much of the foundations for such a force have already been laid.

The coming years will also see more and more sailors and marines trading places with the French counterparts – and *vice versa* – as part of the Personnel Exchange Programme designed to improve the understanding of the respective navies so they can work together more effectively.

In addition extra work will be carried out on the two navies' aircraft carrier programmes allowing British jets and aircraft to fly from the de Gaulle and French aircraft to operate from HMS Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales when they enter service towards the decade's end.

Boldly going again

BARELY four months after returning from a mammoth deployment survey ship HMS Enterprise is once again ploughing through the high seas.

The Royal Navy's star ship (sorry – the ship's company actually prefer the nickname 'Mighty E') is heading to the South Atlantic to gather reams of hydrographic data to enhance our knowledge of the waters of the southern ocean.

The Devonport-based survey ship only came home from a 20-month deployment in the summer. After leave for the ship's company and a spot of maintenance for the ship following her exertions off West Africa, in the Indian Ocean, the hard work at sea resumed in August in preparation for the current deployment.

Enterprise has undergone six weeks of intensive operational sea training with the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation off Plymouth.

She's also found time to host members of her various affiliate organisations at sea to give them an insight into life on a survey vessel; 96 people (that's precisely double the number of ship's company) including the ship's sponsor Lady Forbes, the Worshipful Company of Cutlers, Royal Devonshire Yeomanry, Sea Cadets and youngsters from Heathcoat and Two Moors schools in Tiverton, Enterprise's affiliated town, plus Royal British Legion members climbed aboard the ship.

They were treated to demonstrations of fire-fighting, force protection – how Enterprise defends herself – and sea boat operations, as well as observing some seabed sampling.

In addition to the affiliates, the ship also took loved ones to sea for a 'families day' to thank parents, partners and children for their continued support.

At any one time two thirds of the 72 sailors assigned to Enterprise are aboard the ship; rotation of the crew every ten or so weeks allows the Mighty E – and her sister Echo, currently deployed east of Suez – to remain away from home much longer than traditional Royal Navy vessels.

In Enterprise's case, the present deployment shouldn't be too protracted: she's due back from the South Atlantic next year to take part in a Joint Warrior exercise in Scotland, before deploying once more.

"Once again, Enterprise is back doing what she does best: deploying around the world, providing essential, cutting-edge environmental data-gathering to support UK defence and other mariners," said her Commanding Officer Cdr Jon Holmes.

"Despite many changes in her ship's company and a tight schedule to maintain and train the ship, Enterprise deployed on time and is well placed to meet the challenges of overseas operations."

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Daring ready to deploy

THE most important surface ship in a generation is ready to take her place in the battle line after overcoming her last test.

HMS Daring, the first of six cutting edge Type 45 destroyers, will sail on her maiden deployment in the new year after coming through final training with flying colours.

The Portsmouth-based warship has just completed two months in the hands of the team from the Flag Officer Sea Training, specialists who prepare the entire Fleet for all eventualities when deployed around the globe.

Daring left Operational Sea Training (OST) off Plymouth with a 'very satisfactory' score from the assessors – most ships generally pass the exacting workout with a 'satisfactory' mark.

"Everyone's really pleased that the ship did so well at OST – we are ready for anything now," said LS John Davies.

"It will be great to get home though, see my wife and relax for the first time in two long months."

Those 'two long months' saw Daring carry out hurricane disaster relief at Bull Point opposite Devonport Naval Base, evacuate civilians from a worsening international crisis, deal with terrorist attacks while alongside in the base, demonstrate that she can cope with an attack involving biological or chemical weapons, fight off swarms of small attack craft at sea and, not least, her *raison d'être*, fending off air attack.

Daring came through her first stint with FOST in the spring of 2010, during which numerous lessons were learned about training the 45s for front-line deployments – and since when Daring herself has received additional firepower (Phalanx automated Gatling guns) and witnessed a substantial change in personnel (including a new commanding officer).

Although half the class of six 45s have been declared operational, none have deployed yet as they've undergone either training, maintenance, enhancements – or all.

2012 will be the 'Year of the 45' with Daring, Dauntless and Diamond all earmarked to make their maiden deployments.

The first to go, fittingly, will be Daring – although when and where to will not be disclosed until nearer her departure date.

Over the next few weeks bespoke kit for her impending deployment will be fitted and tested and there will be some final maintenance and husbandry before the destroyer sails in the new year.

"I now have absolute confidence in my ship and her crew," said Commanding Officer Capt Guy Robinson.

"I have seen them face the challenges that may be expected of a warship which could be asked to operate anywhere across the globe.

"Recent events in the Mediterranean and Middle East demonstrate just how quickly a crisis can develop. Daring's versatility, reach and punch make her a very credible UK asset – and one that I am proud to command."



'Fantastic weekend' for Protector

ADDING a dash of colour to the River Dart was the distinctive red and white hull of the newest addition to the Fleet: HMS Protector.

The survey vessel made her debut at Dartmouth as part of her first spell of Operational Sea Training, to prepare her for her inaugural deployment to Antarctica.

Over the past six months, the former MV Polarbjørn – Polar Bear – has been 'navified' with the relevant equipment, sensors, systems and fixtures, turning an icebreaker and oil rig support vessel into one of Her Majesty's Ships.

Protector has been loaned to the Navy while the future of Britain's erstwhile ice patrol ship, HMS Endurance, is decided following her flooding incident three years ago.

The last act of turning a civvy ship into a Royal Navy vessel has been handing her over to the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation who assess the ability of the 88 sailors aboard to deal with any trials and tribulations operating around Antarctica might throw at them.

And at least some of the duties the sailors will be expected to perform when Protector deploys imminently is flying the flag for the UK, hosting dignitaries and members of the public.

Hence the weekend in Dartmouth, where the CO of Britannia Royal Naval College, Cdre Simon Williams, was among the VIPs, as were the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers, one of the new patrol ship's affiliates.

They were treated to a 'capability demonstration' of fire-fighting, man-overboard exercise, sea boat drills and a very thorough tour of the 5,000-tonne vessel.

FOST staff ensured there was added realism to proceedings by invoking a flooding exercise during the demonstration to give guests an idea of how Endurance was saved – and how the men and women of Protector would react should such an incident ever befall them.

At the same time, the ship's new survey motor boat, James Caird IV, ranged up and down the Dart to produce a hydrographic survey of these waters.

The weekend in Dartmouth coincided with the national act of remembrance for Britain's war dead.

And so it was that Protector provided personnel, led by CO Capt Pete Sparkes, to join locals at the town's war memorial to pay their respects and lay a wreath to honour the sacrifices of those who have lain down their lives for their country.

After that the Protectors opened their gangway to visitors and hosted hundreds of members of the public from the mildly curious to serious ship enthusiasts.

"It was a fantastic weekend," Capt Sparkes enthused. "Dartmouth is a very appreciative – and knowledgeable – maritime town. All ships are made to feel especially welcome here and Protector was no exception."



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Stand-by for action

THIS is how Royal Marines would deal with a riot.

Shoulder-to-shoulder, shield in one hand, baton in another, the men of the new Fleet Stand-by Rifle Squadron form a phalanx to keep flames from Molotov cocktails at bay.

The squadron is a company-sized group of commandos which was formed over the summer to span a gap in the Navy's amphibious landing forces – with 40 Commando beginning training for future deployment to Afghanistan and the rest of 3 Commando Brigade already heavily engaged in Helmand on Operation Herrick 14, a very high readiness contingent unit was quickly formed.

The Rifle Squadron is a light role unit including a number of specialist support weapon operators, assault engineers, signallers, drivers and vehicle mechanics.

In addition to commandos' conventional war skills, the unit has been trained in all aspects of amphibious warfare, plus boarding operations, public order (hence the riot training, pictured here by LA(Phot) Emz Nolan, CTCRM) and urban close combat.

The squadron was formed initially at Norton Manor Camp, home of 40 Commando, and after several weeks' training moved to the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, since when it's made full use of the extensive training facilities and expertise to maintain its high-readiness posture – hence the riot/crowd control with fellow CTCRM green berets acting as the unruly mob.

The squadron is poised to support a number of possible missions such as civilian evacuations, maritime security and humanitarian support from Royal Navy warships. Indeed elements of the squadron have already deployed and others will do so in the near future.

The squadron will stand down next year and the contingency mantle pass to Arbroath-based 45 Commando who will assume responsibility as the lead Commando Group.



'Critical steps' for Lusty

HANDS to Assault Stations. Hands to Assault Stations.

Royal Marines of Hunter Company line up in two 'sticks' on one of HMS *Illustrious*' two aircraft lifts ready to join a Sea King on the carrier's flight deck.

The latest stage of the veteran aircraft carrier's training saw her grapple with the art of an amphibious assault off Plymouth.

Lusty emerged from a £40m refit in the summer, an overhaul which saw her turned into a commando carrier to step into HMS Ocean's 'shoes' when the Mighty O has her own revamp.

Illustrious spent almost her entire 30-year career as a launchpad for Harriers, but serving as an assault ship isn't an entirely alien world for her: she (and the grand old lady of the amphibious world, HMS *Fearless*) were involved in the opening moves of the war against the Taleban back in 2001.

A decade on, however, and personnel and equipment changes mean the skills which served Lusty well then have been re-learned and practised.

Jungles from the Commando Helicopter Force – including one Sea King painted in the famous zebra livery from the Fleet Air Arm's mission in the Balkans in the 1990s – and Merlins from 820 Naval Air Squadron in Culdrose were the steeds for the green berets to ride into battle.

"The sight of Royal Marines being launched from the ship's flight deck was another milestone reached as *Illustrious* prepares to be ready to deploy anywhere in the world," said Lt Cdr Seth George, Lusty's training and development officer.

Those marines came courtesy of Commando Training Centre at Lympstone; Hunter Company is dedicated to helping Royal Marine recruits who pick up injuries get back to full fitness.

"It's been excellent training for both *Illustrious* and Hunter Company," said Lt Col Andy Walker RM, Lusty's dedicated amphibious operations officer.

"For the ship, it was a critical step in proving that we can deliver a potent armed force from the sea to the land.

"For Hunter Company it was a great opportunity to experience life in *Illustrious* – a ship they might well serve in when they join a commando unit after their training."

On this occasion, it was the task of the Hunters to take down a simulated terrorist camp.

The assault training was organised by the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation in Devonport, whose experts are testing the 750-plus souls aboard the carrier – ship's company, tailored air group and embarked forces – through their paces during a two-month-long workout.

The training's good for the ship's company, of course, but highly valuable for the aviators and their ground crews who are getting used to life aboard a 20,000-tonne warship again.

"820 are delighted to be back in the carrier and HMS *Illustrious* in particular, which has been our home for many years in the past," said Cdr Jason Phillips, 820's Commanding Officer.



"Sea training offers a challenge to all, but a great opportunity to integrate as a team and demonstrate the flexibility and capability of delivering air power from the sea."

In addition to her first assault stations practice in her current incarnation, Lusty was thrown into her first Thursday War since refit.

The team at FOST devise various exercises each week – air defence, submarine hunting, disaster relief, civilian evacuations, firefighting and damage control – and there's one constant: Thursday is always all-out war (hence the 'Thursday War' tag).

Around 50 FOSTies filed aboard to assess the performance of the ship's company – and lay on a few surprises for them, such as dropping smoke canisters to simulate fire.

She had to fend off fast jet attacks as they 'launched' missiles and 'dropped' bombs and thwart submarines' attempts to cripple her with torpedoes – and at 686ft long and more than 100ft wide, she presents a very inviting target to air, surface and sub-surface targets.

It would be too easy if the ship's ring of defences simply smote all attackers, so the FOST team ensured that at least some of the bombs, torpedoes and missiles got through, causing fires, flooding and machinery breakdowns.

It had been a good couple of years since the carrier last had the pleasure of a Thursday War – and it, as well as all the other challenges FOST has thrown up for the ship's company stand *Illustrious*' men and women in good stead as far as her Commanding Officer Capt Jerry Kyd is concerned.

"After all the hard work bringing this mighty ship out of refit and completing her sea trials in record time, it's fantastic to be training and proving our new role as a helicopter and commando carrier," he added.

"All my crew have been magnificent in what they have achieved this year – and I could not be prouder.

"*Illustrious* is very much back in the Fleet and she will very soon be ready for tasking anywhere in the globe."

In addition to the FOST staff, also witnessing the progress the carrier is making was Britain's second most senior sailor, Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar (he commanded Lusty's now-defunct sister HMS *Invisible* nearly a decade ago).

He chatted with numerous members of the ship's company and watched them tackle a variety of problems caused by the FOST staff – and was impressed by what he saw.

"The team onboard look in great shape – they're obviously receptive to their training, so I expect great things," the admiral said.

"Following this period of Operational Sea Training, Lusty and her ship's company need to be ready, very ready, to deploy on operations anywhere in the world at very short notice."

He's now back on dry land, while the ship's training continues until just the right side of Christmas.

Pictures: PO(Phot) Ray Jones and LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, HMS *Illustrious*



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AS HMS Daring prepares to take her place in the nation's order of battle, the fifth of the Type 45s has completed her maiden voyage: a three-week period of initial sea trials.

Two years precisely to the day that HMS Defender entered the waters of the Clyde – October 21 2009 – she slipped away from the BAE yard at Scotstoun and made her way down Glasgow's great artery long before the first rays of sunshine brought light to a cold autumn day.

"The darkness was not disappointing – the dockyard lights actually highlighted the ship as she sailed," said Defender's weapon engineer officer Cdr Pete Walton.

"The timing of sunrise could not have been better as Defender was at last seen in all her glory as she appeared out of the mist and sailed under the Erskine bridge."

A mixed civilian and Naval ship's company took Defender (pictured below off Greenock) to sea on this first foray.

Thanks to the progress made with her four older

sisters – Daring, Dauntless, Diamond and Dragon, all now in the hands of the Royal Navy – her maiden voyage was the shortest of the Type 45 destroyer programme to date.

That said, all the basic functions – if you can ever call Britain's most advanced surface ship basic – needed testing: speed, manoeuvrability, power and propulsion systems, 'domestic services' – galley, laundry, messes and the like – plus weapons systems and sensors.

"The first half of the sea trials – feeling the full power and manoeuvrability of a 7,500-tonne vessel was most impressive," said Cdr Pete Walton.

"Even that did not beat the second half which saw the combat systems come to life. The sensors and weapons are a fantastic leap in technology."

Spoken like a true WE...

Now back alongside, further work and testing systems will continue at the BAE yard, while the ever-growing ship's company make best use of their time on the Clyde to forge links with the good folk of Glasgow.

Defender will be affiliated to the great city for the next 35 years (as she will to Exeter) and her

ship's company have already started to fundraise for their chosen local charity, the Kelbourne School for the physically impaired.

The ship's company have run regular events with BAE employees including a couple of race nights organised by clubz LPT Lee Horsman and a marathon row along the length of the River Clyde (176km or 109 miles if you prefer old money).

Money raised from these events was increased thanks to a tuck shop and laundry run by BAE employees Robert Cullen and Derek Keough, meaning a total of £2,300 was this month shared between the ship's charities and BAE's charity, Erskine Hospital.

As for the ship, she'll return to sea in March for a second set of trials and is on schedule to make her debut in her future home of Portsmouth in mid-July 2012.

After more trials and training, she'll take her place in the Fleet from early 2013.

Just along the jetty at Scotstoun, HMS Duncan celebrated her first birthday with a cake shaped as a number one, generously provided by the Worshipful Company of Cooks – one of the destroyer's affiliates.

The ship was launched in October last year on

the anniversary of the Battle of Camperdown, the 18th Century victory over the Dutch when Admiral Duncan led the Royal Navy to a decisive triumph.

In the 12 months since the launch, as well as helping to complete the warship, the growing ship's company have been giving Duncan her soul by fostering affiliations and nurturing friendships.

The Worshipful Company of Cooks obliged and one of their number, Mark Grove, flew up to the Clyde with a surprise birthday cake and celebratory drink for the ship's team.

In a twist to traditional naval cake cutting, the birthday cake was skilfully slain by Duncan's most 'mature' member of the ship's company, LS 'Cod' Roe, who said: "I only joined the ship the day before, so I'm now hoping it'll be cake every Tuesday standeasy."

Cdr Phil Game, Duncan's Senior Naval Officer added: "Part of our role in build is to develop our affiliations which will ensure a fruitful relationship throughout the ship's life over several decades."

"This surprise cake was a great gift from our friends at the Worshipful Company of Cooks to celebrate our first birthday."



Fifth Type 45 in her element

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'Our bond with the region is stronger than ever...'

FILLING the pews in the magnificent Cathedral Church of Christ, Blessed Mary the Virgin and St Cuthbert of Durham – better known simply as Durham Cathedral – are more than half the ship's company of the nation's flagship (pictured here by LA(Phot) Martin Carney).

HMS Bulwark spent five days in the North-East as she reaffirmed her bond with the region – and in particular her affiliated city.

Nearly 200 members of the ship's company headed a few miles down the Great North Road from Bulwark's berth at Northumbrian Quay, North Shields for the highlight of their stay on Tyneside: a Freedom of the City parade through the heart of Durham.

The sight of sailors and Royal Marines, led by the Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth, marching through the historic centre of the county town brought day-to-day life to a standstill.

Thousands of Durhamites lined the cobbled streets to applaud the marchers as they headed from the city's racecourse to Palace Green ahead of a service of thanksgiving in the 12th-Century cathedral.

After their marching exertions the ship's company were understandably a bit peckish, so they were invited to a nearby hotel for a meal with local dignitaries.

And just in case that didn't suffice, the chairman of Durham County Council presented Bulwark's Commanding Officer Capt Alex Burton with a hamper of local produce; he also left the city with a specially-commissioned scroll by local artist Erich Thompson depicting watercolour scenes of local landmarks.

Bulwark's football and rugby teams both had runs out against Durham sides; the latter were "convincingly victorious".

As for the assault ship herself, she hosted a reception and capability demonstration for more than 300 VIPs while alongside on the Tyne.

The 18,000-tonne leviathan is now back in Devonport undergoing a spot of light maintenance. She had, however, found it hard to leave old Durham town (sorry).

"All visits are enjoyable, but one to a ship's affiliated area is even more so – we have been absolutely overwhelmed by the warmth and hospitality extended to HMS Bulwark and we are very lucky to be affiliated to an area which displays such pride in the ship and her crew," said Capt Burton.

"Departing with fond memories, we remain safe in the knowledge that our bond with the region is stronger than ever."

His ship is at two days' notice to sail – and five days' notice to take up operations anywhere in the world as the UK's on-call capital ship.

■ Bulwark demonstrates her maritime power, centre pages



'Endless gratitude

ON THE streets of Barnstaple they turned out in force to applaud.

And on the streets of Plymouth.
And in the nation's capital.
Around the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone.
And in Exeter too.
They were honoured by shoppers.
By children waving flags furiously.
By civic dignitaries.
By their comrades.
By civil servants.
By members of Parliament.
By the Queen's consort.
Fresh from their return from Afghanistan, the men and women of 3 Commando Brigade marched through cities large and towns small on a series of homecoming parades, so the British public could show their appreciation for sacrifices made during the six months they spent in theatre.

The first of those parades came in London, where 120 men from brigade headquarters, 45 and 42 Commandos, 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group, 29 Commando Regiment RA, Commando Logistic Regiment, 24 Commando Engineer Regiment and 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment took to the streets, led by the Royal Marines Brethren.

Among the green berets marching were men wounded in action on this tour of duty – men who strove to be fit to take their place in the ranks once more and parade alongside their Royal Marines brethren.

Mne Harry Butcher was wounded in a rocket attack in September – "My left leg was torn by shrapnel and there was a lot of nerve damage" – and was flown back to the UK to recuperate.

He found being separated from his 42 Commando comrades particularly tough.

"It's frustrating when you don't know what's going on and you don't know what they're up to," he explains.

Now they're back at their Bickleigh barracks home – something which has been a real boost to Harry's morale.

"It's good being back with the lads," he adds. "It's a weight off your shoulders when you know they're back safe."

"This parade was good because it gave people the chance to find out what we've been doing and to show their support."

For his Commanding Officer, Lt Col Ewen Murchison, the march through the capital was something of a "surreal experience".

He added: "To be in London when we were in Afghanistan just a few days ago was strange."

"But it showed the adaptability of the Royal Marines – how they can change so easily from being so recently on tour to being in London to show off their drill



● (Clockwise from top) 3 Commando Brigade march through the streets of Plymouth; standing to attention in the shadow of the Palace of Westminster; marching out of the gates of Plymouth's Royal Citadel; and troops of the Commando Logistic Regiment wait to receive their Afghanistan Campaign Medal at RM Chivenor

Pictures: LA(Photos) James Crawford and Joel Rouse, FRPU West, and Dave Hillhouse, 42 Commando

skills on parade."

Upon reaching the Palace of Westminster, the troops were invited inside for an official reception hosted by members of Parliament.

By far the largest homecoming parades were staged in the brigade's South West heartland. More than 1,000 Royal Marines, gunners, sappers and soldiers paraded through Plymouth.

As in London, so some of those taking part had been wounded and accompanied their comrades in wheelchairs.

Hundreds of loved ones and well-wishers braved storm force winds and driving rain to gather on Plymouth Hoe and along Royal Parade in the city centre on November 11 for a combined homecoming parade and Remembrance Service.

Proceedings began with a medals ceremony for 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group – a specialist unit recently formed to gather intelligence, analyse it and then use it to brigade's advantage; it comprises not just Royal Marines Commandos, but also personnel from the RN, Army and RAF.

With the medals presented, the full parade formed up for an Armistice Day service, where the roll of honour was read out.

After the traditional two minutes' silence at 11am on the

11th day of the 11th month, the 1,100 personnel began their march through the city centre, ending at the Citadel.

"The timing of the homecoming parade could not be more poignant," said the brigade's Lt Col Tim Purbrick.

"As we marched through our home city of Plymouth on Armistice Day, those who made the ultimate sacrifice during Operation Herrick 14 – as well as those who have fallen in previous conflicts – were at the forefront of our thoughts."

"The parade was also an opportunity for the Royal Marines, soldiers, sailors and airmen of the Brigade to thank the people of Plymouth – and our families – for the tremendous support they had given to us over the last six months."

Within days, 3 Cdo Bde were on the streets of Devon again, this time cheered through its county town.

There was a similarly impressive turn-out in Exeter as 650 men and women drawn from 42 Cdo, 45 Cdo, 30 Cdo, 29 Cdo Regt RA, 24 Cdo Regiment RE, the CLR, 1st Battalion The Rifles, as well as elements of 7 Armoured Brigade and 101 Logistics Brigade paraded.

Those personnel comprised one tenth of the 6,555 men and women from all three Services under Brig Ed Davis, Commanding Officer

of 3 Commando Brigade and Task Force Helmand, during the six months of Operation Herrick 14.

Twenty-three never returned and their names were added to the Roll of Honour which was read out during the thanksgiving service at Exeter Cathedral.

"The names of those who gave their lives, and the wounded, will be indelibly marked on our souls forever," Brig Davis told the congregation.

"Their sacrifice will not be forgotten and will forever be an inspiration to us all. Simply, their humanity, unyielding soldiering and insatiable desire to make a difference, made the difference."

"Irrespective of rank, cap badge or nation, each person played their part in full and achieved something very special: hope for a safer world and confidence in a brighter future for the people of Helmand. We owe them all our endless gratitude and respect."

"I salute each and every one of them. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our families and friends back home, particularly here in the South West, for their rock-solid support without which our task in Helmand would have been impossible."

A crowd some 11,000 strong turned out on the streets of Barnstaple – that's more than half of the small North Devon town's populace – during one of the most memorable days in the history of the Commando Logistic

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- 41,000 patrols conducted – more than 200 per day;
- 45 per cent reduction in insurgent attacks across 3 Cdo Bde's entire area of operations compared with previous years;
- 7½ tonnes of homemade explosive were discovered;
- 57km (35 miles) of roads were built – there are now 350km (217 miles) of roads in the province (equivalent to driving from Plymouth to London on the A303);
- eight clinics were built, raising the total number to 58 – nine out of ten Helmand residents now have access to primary health care;
- 50 per cent of the Afghan Police in Helmand achieved basic literacy levels;
- 650 *shuras* – or meetings with elders and communities – were held, with 100 more informal *shuras* held at local level;
- 40 schools were built increasing the number to 133;
- Ten bazaars opened, housing a total of 300 shops.



Regiment.

In the sunshine and cloudless sky, the CLR men and women from Chivenor, a couple of miles outside Barnstaple, marched proudly through the market town to the cheers and applause of their families, friends and locals who jumped at the opportunity, in the words of the mayor Cllr Ian Roome, "to say welcome back".

As well as thousands of Devonians in Barnstaple to greet the regiment, the Captain General Royal Marines HRH the Duke of Edinburgh took the salute before returning with the troops to their base to preside over an official medal ceremony.

The Duke presented many of the medals himself before making a speech, acknowledging the support network provided by the friends and families of Service personnel.

In the case of the Commando Logistic Regiment, its duties were to maintain vehicles, run combat logistic patrols – delivering crucial supplies to outlying bases – provide medics to front-line bases and act as mentors to the Afghan National Security Force.

"The rapturous applause as they were led on the parade by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines was a true testament of the jubilation felt by ever single person," said Lt Paul Falconer, Officer Commanding CLR's Combat Forward Surgical Group

Medical Squadron. "It was plain to see from the smiles that everyone had a good time.

"The Royal Marines have been at RMB Chivenor since October 1995, but never has the bond between the public and the troops been so strong."

And in Lymington, by far the smallest, but no-less-hearty, homecoming parade was held by some 50 musicians of the Band of HM Royal Marines Commando Training Centre.

They carried out the Band Service's wartime role of medical support, such as ambulance drivers or working with the extensive medical team at Camp Bastion in the Joint Force Medical Group.

They also slipped back into their 'day job' on occasions, staging morale-raising concerts.

Their return was marked by the band marching around the compact base, where staff – Royal Marines and civilians – broke off from their daily routine to applaud the musicians for their efforts.

That was followed by the medal presentation parade, where guest of honour was the Band Service's Principal Director of Music Lt Col Nick Grace, before all the 50 or so returning Royal Marines enjoyed a private reception with around 300 family members and friends.

"It's been a difficult but thoroughly rewarding tour for everyone involved and all the Royal

Marines on parade have made a real contribution to a successful Operation Herrick 14. To be here with all our family members present was a real occasion," said Capt Richard Harvey, the detachment commander.

Sgt Matt Weites, who was in charge of the Ambulance Response Troop, added: "It was great, the culmination of a difficult period for all the families and it made us appreciate them even more."

Seven of the 12-strong team he led were drawn from the Band Service (personnel from the RN, Army and RAF completed the dozen).

Along with manning the ambulances and helping with casualty evacuation, the team was also involved in repatriation ceremonies of personnel back to the UK.

The troop, based at Camp Bastion, has been singled out 'for acts above and beyond the call of duty' and received the Ambulance Service Institute Military Award for 2011 at a ceremony in the House of Lords.

"Operation Herrick 14 was an extremely busy and challenging tour, and it was thoroughly rewarding to do our bit to help the lads on the front line," said 37-year-old Sgt Weites from Exeter.

"All the members of the ART can be proud of their efforts on tour, this award is very much for all involved and indeed the Joint Force Medical Group as a whole."

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Thrust into the Spanish cockpit

THESE are the magnificent, unmistakeable lines of a capital ship.

This is His Majesty's Ship Repulse, the 11th of 12 vessels to carry the name on behalf of the nation since the reign of Elizabeth I, seen here in her 1936 configuration, fresh from a three-year rebuild in Portsmouth.

Within weeks of this photograph being taken, the 20-year-old warship found herself thrust into a crisis which finds echoes with events in Libya more than seven decades later.

Fresh from her rebuild and recommissioning, Repulse was assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet and, as Spain descended into civil war, she was dispatched to the Balearic Islands to evacuate British citizens.

Minorca sided with the government, the 'reds'. Ibiza and Majorca sided with the 'whites' of General Franco.

As it is today, so in 1936 was Majorca a popular tourist destination as well as a home in the sun for retired Britons.

Those Britons were becoming, in the words of Capt

John Henry Godfrey, Repulse's captain, "rather jumpy". Their plight worsened when the Reds on Minorca began bombing Majorca.

Repulse was ordered in to evacuate British citizens and other civilians who wished to leave Majorca.

On the morning of July 29 Repulse anchored at Los Pinos and over the next eight hours 503 men, women and children – Britons, Americans, Germans, Austrians, Czechs, Norwegians and French among others – were embarked.

With the last refugees aboard, Repulse weighed anchor – and was treated to the horrifying spectacle of Palma subjected to its heaviest air raid yet.

The men of Repulse did what the sailors of Cumberland and York would do in 2011 – they gave up their bunks and messes for the homeless.

The midshipmen's gunroom became a crèche, at least 20 elderly ladies made use of the captain's cabin, the pregnant and ill were hosted by the warrant officers, and a sub-lieutenant was named 'Officer Commanding, dogs' to make sure the "spaniels, long-haired dachshunds, poodles and retrievers" did not run amok.

"There is something terribly pathetic about refugees," wrote Capt Godfrey. "It's no joke being pitch-forked out of your home at 24 hours' notice and told to go on board a man-of-war with suitcases only."

The refugees were safely delivered to Marseille and Repulse turned for Valencia to evacuate citizens fleeing the mainland.

As she entered port, Repulse was greeted by locals shaking their fists at her – "the traditional communist-anarchist salute".

Repulse spent a fortnight in the port. Twice daily a train from Madrid would arrive carrying refugees. They were met by one of the warship's officers who organised onward transport.

Repulse's duties as 'Senior Naval Officer, Valencia' were eventually assumed by depot ship HMS Resource and the battle-cruiser sailed for Gibraltar, her refugee mission done.

HMS Repulse and her older sister Renown were the apotheosis of Great War battle-cruiser design (though laid down in WW1, HMS Hood was not completed until long after the war's end, having been delayed to incorporate the

lessons of Jutland).

She entered service too late for the great clash with the German Fleet, firing her main guns in anger only once at the Second Battle of the Heligoland Bight in 1917 when she damaged the light cruiser SMS Königsberg.

Repulse was present at the surrender of the German Fleet in November 1918 and accompanied HMS Hood on her famous world tour in the '20s.

Following her involvement in Spain, she took part in the Spithead Coronation review of 1937 and was due to take George IV and the Queen to Canada in May 1939 – but the growing crisis in Europe ruled her out.

Instead, Repulse was used initially to safeguard important convoys, took part in the opening stages of the Norwegian campaign and helped in the hunt for the Bismarck before a shortage of fuel forced her to return to Scapa Flow.

In the autumn of 1941 she was assigned to Force Z with flagship HMS Prince of Wales to deter Japanese aggression in the Far East. The two ships met their end when they were attacked by Japanese aircraft off the Malay peninsula on December 10 1941.

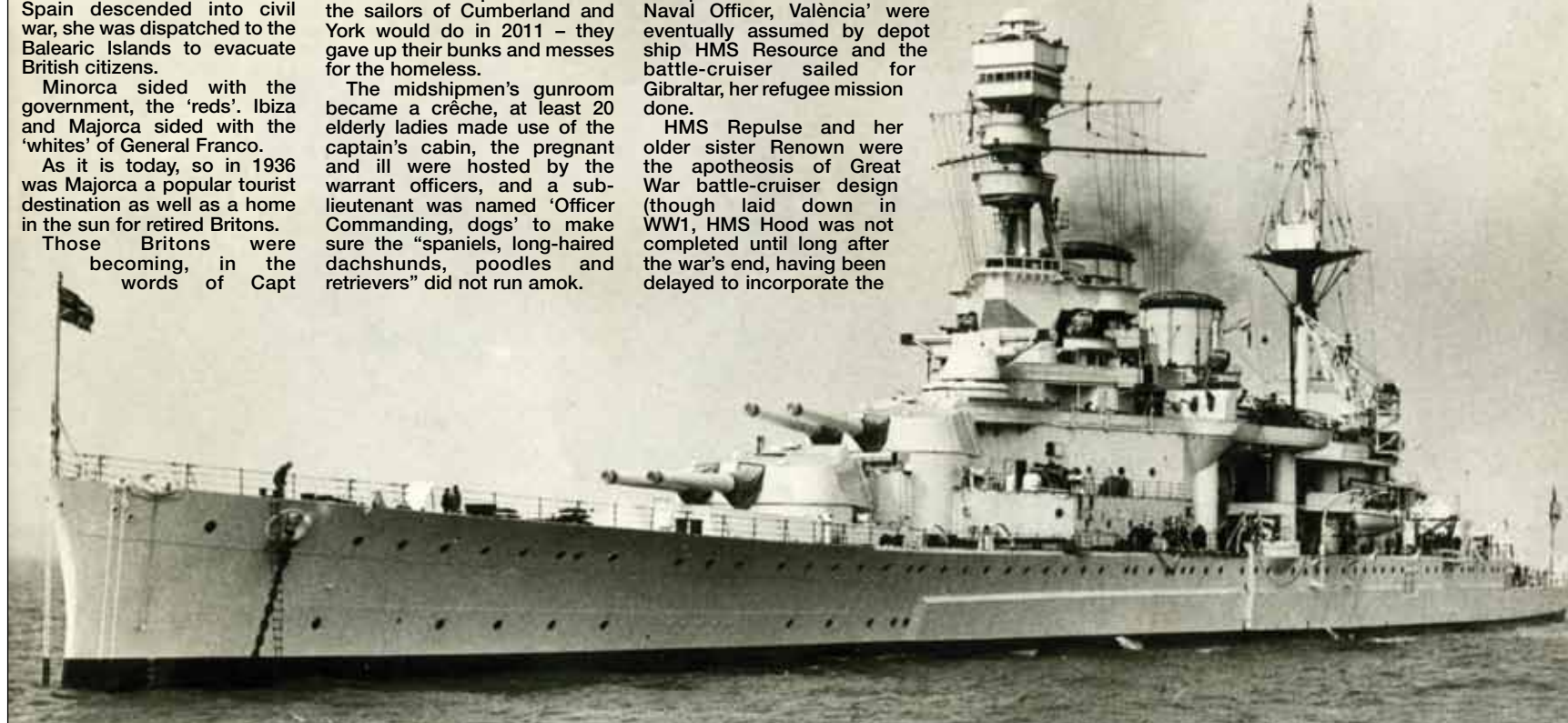
Putting up a valiant fight, she was hit by five torpedoes and capsized taking 508 men down with her.



Cadiz 1596
Martinique 1762
The Saints 1782
Atlantic 1939-40
Norway 1940
Bismarck 1941

Class: Renown-class fast battle-cruiser
Motto: *Qui Tangit Frangitur* – anyone who touches me shatters
Builder: John Brown, Clydebank
Laid down: January 25, 1915
Launched: January 8, 1916
Commissioned: August 18 1916
Displacement: 34,600 tons
Length: 794ft
Beam: 89ft 11½in
Draught: 29ft 8in
Speed: 31½ knots
Range: 3,650 nautical miles
Complement: 1,181
Propulsion: 4 x shafts, 2 x steam turbine sets generating 112,000 shp
42 x water-tube boilers
Armament: 3 x 2 15in guns
4 x 3 4in guns
6 x 1 4in anti-aircraft guns
2 x 8 2-pounder 'pom-pom' anti-aircraft guns
8 x 21in Mk II torpedo tubes
Armour: Belt: 2-9in; decks: 1-4 in; barbettes: 4-7in; turrets: 7-9in; conning tower: 10in; bulkheads: 3-4 in
Aircraft: up to four seaplanes

Facts and figures (1939)



PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES – The fall of Hong Kong, 1941

THREE days after Christmas 1941 and hundreds of sailors carry their kit bags down Garden Road in Hong Kong, watched by the colony's new Japanese masters.

Our delve into the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum this month takes us back seven decades to the very dark month of December 1941.

The first six months of the war in the Far East proved to be a litany of success for the Rising Sun – and a seemingly never-ending chain of disasters for Britain and its Navy.

One-by-one, great names in the Fleet were chalked off its order of battle: Prince of Wales, Repulse, Exeter, Cornwall, Hermes.

As for HMS Tamar, the naval base in Hong Kong, it had been written off long before war with Japan – as had the colony itself.

Thanks to their occupation of the Chinese mainland, the Japanese surrounded the colony. There was, Churchill determined, "not the slightest chance" of holding or relieving it.

And so when war came, the jetties had largely been emptied. All that was left was the destroyer HMS Thracian, three gunboats and eight motor torpedo boats, plus some 1,400 sailors and Royal Marines; given the paltry naval forces, most of the men were committed on land.

Despite Churchill's conviction that there was no hope of saving Hong Kong, the sailors and marines were ordered to defend the island "to the last man and last round".

They did so under almost constant bombardment from Japanese aircraft (who had uncontested command of the skies) and artillery; during one ferocious barrage the guns put down 230 shells on the dockyard

in an hour.

Most of the torpedo boats were sunk trying to stop Japanese troop carriers crossing the harbour, Thracian ran aground doing the same and was abandoned, and the last RN vessel, gunboat HMS Cicala – led by a one-armed lieutenant commander – was knocked out by air attack; her crew immediately joined the struggle on land.

Cicala was destroyed on December 20. Hong Kong fell five days later at a cost of more than 4,400 Commonwealth casualties, 148 of them Royal Navy.

The fighting never got as far as the dockyard – Japanese troops didn't march into the base until Boxing Day and spent a couple of days determining the fate of the sailors.

In time they were sent to Kowloon by ferry, then forced to march to a transit camp. Many abandoned their kit by their wayside while those who stopped to rest were forced to continue with a kick or prod from a bayonet.

By then, the original Tamar – an 1863 troop/supply ship – which gave the naval base its name, was at the bottom of Hong Kong harbour. She was scuttled to prevent her falling into Japanese hands.

Like the rest of the colony, the wooden ship put up a tough fight, only succumbing when the Royal Artillery hammered her.

■ THIS photograph (HU002779, taken from the papers of Fleet Street's last naval correspondent, the late Desmond Wettern) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



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Tales of the Arabian knights



● Prince Charles enjoys a joke with a sailor from HMS Argyll in the grounds of the British Embassy in Kuwait



● 211 Flight's engineer enjoys the view from the side of HMS Argyll's Lynx during rapid roping drills to hone the skills of the frigate's boarding team



● Peek-a-boo... A Pakistani sailor cautiously raises his head above the deck level as he practises boarding HMS St Albans.

OR should that be dames as Her Majesty's Ships are, of course, female?

The knight in the foreground is HMS Argyll, while turning and evidently wanting to make best speed for Portsmouth after four months in the Gulf is her youngest sister HMS St Albans whom she's just relieved.

Key to the Saint's success since arriving in the Middle East region at the beginning of July was the ability to board and search vessels deemed to be suspicious by the international naval forces safeguarding these vast and challenging waters.

So to ensure Argyll was at the very top of her game upon superseding St Albans, the Devonport-based frigate made use of one of the best training facilities in the world during a four-day stop in Crete.

The Mediterranean island is typically the last port of call for any RN vessel heading east of Suez, with the impressive NATO ranges offering the perfect 'health check' for any Allied warship in the region.

The NATO base is home to FORACS (FORces sensors and weapons Accuracy Check Site) which tests the myriad of sensors, communications, radars and sonars to ensure they're in full working order, allowing NATO ships to pass crucial information to each other accurately.

Royal Navy warships have been using the ranges at Souda Bay since 1984 – indeed they couldn't give a FORACS for any other test site if they're heading east of Suez...

As well as NATO specialists, experts from the Royal Navy's own Maritime Capability, Trials and Assessment team were on board to check Argyll's kit.

Which came through, unsurprisingly, with a clean bill of health – the ship is fresh from a £20m 11-month refit in Rosyth, followed by a year of intensive training.

In the three decades since the Crete facility was established, it's grown to including a forward logistics site, missile firing range, and the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operations Centre for board and search training.

Indeed, the ship's company found the latter "the biggest unexpected benefit" of their four-day visit to the Mediterranean island.

The centre features the Aris, a 2,500-ton former Hellenic Navy training ship which has been turned into a 'playground' for board and search teams to practise the art of boarding, searching and securing a vessel of substantial dimensions.

Extra realism for the training sessions comes courtesy of 'simunition' – simulated ammunition, which possesses the properties of the real thing... minus the lethality (it does, Argyll's Royals tell us, "smart somewhat" when it hits the body).

"The close quarters battle training using the simunition was extremely useful – Aris is an exceptional environment for realistic training and the standard of instruction was high, giving us useful, objective feedback," said Capt Sam Burrell RM, heading the frigate's Royal Marines detachment.

"In particular, the lessons we received on boarding a small boat or skiff were very useful."

Thanks to all the work carried out on the ship during her refit, his men enjoy better facilities for both their personal kit and weapons and equipment – which means they can respond even more rapidly if called upon to act, 24 hours a day.

The marines have been conducting

training alongside the ship's 'dark blue' Royal Navy boarding team pretty much since the moment the frigate cast off from the Devonport jetty, rapid roping from the frigate's Lynx helicopter, practising search techniques, honing marksmanship.

Overall, Argyll left Crete in even better shape than when she arrived.

"The FORACS site provides us with a detailed understanding of our systems and thus that knowledge allows us to best exploit our kit," said Cdr Paul Stroude, the frigate's Commanding Officer.

"In addition the board and search training is incredibly valuable in allowing the teams to hone their techniques on what is a large ship.

"Whilst the NATO facilities are a key attraction for the visit, the ability to have a run ashore in the city of Chania and relax before an extended period at sea is always welcome."

Meanwhile in the Arabian Sea...

Only a few weeks after joining forces with the George H W Bush, St Albans conducted a 'passage exercise' with the USS John C Stennis.

The 103,000-tonne leviathan, which can carry up to 90 jets, propeller-driven aircraft and helicopters, is supporting Operations Enduring Freedom and New Dawn – the codenames for the US missions in Afghanistan and Iraq respectively.

As with the meet-up with the Bush, the encounter with the Stennis allowed a 'crosspoll' – literally cross pollination – with sailors from the respective ships swapping boots and experiencing life, albeit briefly, in a different Navy.

Of a more wary nature were two exercises the ships carried out: one anti-submarine (St Albans' core business), one air defence.

Barely had the Stennis passed out of sight than an old familiar friend hove into view – and we're not talking about the Argyll.

Before raising the ensign of Pakistan, PNS Shah Jahan was HMS Active, a veteran of the Falklands War which was sold to the Commonwealth nation in the mid-90s.

In the hands of the Pakistanis, she's undergone some changes, not least the Wasp and Lynx she used to operate have been replaced by an Alouette III which, until this day, the aircrew had never set down on the back of a Type 23 frigate.

Well, that's a bridge now crossed as the French-built aircraft touched down, picked up St Albans' Commanding Officer Cdr Tom Sharpe, and carried him across to the Shah Jahan on a short flight described as "highly memorable".

While the Alouette was picking up the Saint's CO, the frigate's sea boats were racing across to the Pakistani warship to collect its boarding team.

They returned and carried out several hours of training aboard the Type 23 with expert instruction from St Albans' own well-honed Royal Navy/Royal Marines boarders.

As the sun set over the Gulf of Oman, the Pakistanis returned to the Shah Jahan and the Saint turned west, ready to hand the baton of Gulf duties over to Argyll.

The handover saw relevant material, information and kit passed on to the new arrival from the old hands before the two ships conducted a light-hearted steam past – squirting fire hoses and hurling mock missiles at each other.

The Saints unveiled a series of posters and banners, not least a giant picture of a Christmas tree to helpfully remind

the 200-plus souls on Argyll about what they're missing while on their six-month deployment...

Not that the Gulf is all sand, sand and yet more sand.

No, the grounds of the British Embassy in Kuwait are really quite lush – as Argyll's ship's company found as they helped Kuwaitis celebrate two key anniversaries in the emirate's recent history.

It is 50 years since the small state celebrated independence from the United Kingdom – and 20 since it was liberated from the short but brutal rule of Saddam Hussein after his 1990 invasion.

Those anniversaries were marked by a visit from the heir to the British throne – a visit which coincided with Argyll taking a break from her initial Gulf patrols.

It was Argyll's task to provide a Royal Guard for a joint parade with the Amiri National Guard at the Bayan Palace – home of the Emir of Kuwait – drawing personnel from all departments: engineers, chefs, writers and seamen specialists.

Having been at sea for the preceding three weeks, they needed a few days of intensive practice once alongside in Kuwait, but on the day, operations officer Lt Cdr James Blythe was delighted by the turnout from his men and women.

"To attend a parade alongside our Coalition partners with the Prince Of Wales here to inspect the Guard is a tremendous honour – a truly proud moment for the ship," he said.

"Indeed, it's a fitting occasion for such an important year in Kuwait's history and it's a real privilege to be the Guard Commander on such a wonderful day."

Following the parade, Argyll's Commanding Officer Cdr Paul Stroude attended a state lunch at the Bayan Palace after which he joined 30 of his sailors at a Royal Garden Party in the grounds of the British Embassy, hosted by Her Majesty's Ambassador to Kuwait, Frank Baker.

On arrival, the Royal Sovereign was raised to signify the presence of the Prince, and the assembled members of the ship's company, who lined the path through the Embassy garden, had the opportunity to chat with Prince Charles.

The Royal Garden Party was a busy affair with local school children and scout groups lined up alongside leading figures from both the Kuwaiti and British communities.

"The Prince seemed delighted to be in Kuwait for such an important occasion and as an ex-officer in the Royal Navy, seemed quite at home talking to the other sailors and me," said POET(ME) Stephen Rudd.

Cdr Stroude added: "It's been a huge privilege for HMS Argyll to be invited to Kuwait to help celebrate such historic anniversaries that have a very deep and emotional significance for the people of Kuwait."

"The fact that Royal Navy warships routinely operate under the authority of, and in close co-operation with, Kuwaiti Naval and Coastguard forces is a further tangible sign of the enduring close alliance and mutual trust between our two nations. Since arriving we have been overwhelmed by the warmth of our welcome."

His ship is currently operating as part of the international maritime Coalition Task Force 152 – which, fittingly, is currently led by the Kuwaitis.

It's the task force's mission to provide maritime security, counter terrorism and improve regional co-operation and stability throughout the Gulf.

Tight fit by moonlight...

SEA King air and ground crews have completed the mammoth task of moving their squadrons home from Afghanistan.

It took a month to transfer the helicopters, equipment and personnel from the Commando Helicopter Force the 3,500 miles from Camp Bastion to their base at RNAS Yeovilton – with a little help from the RAF.

The Junglies of 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons completed their four-and-a-half-year mission over Helmand at the end of September, after which the helicopters were readied for the long journey home.

The helicopters were dispatched to Afghanistan in 2007 to support ground troops, since when they've ferried more than 80,000 personnel to various bases, carried 700 tons of supplies and clocked up some 12,500 hours in the skies of Helmand.

With the mission over, the team at 'HMS Little Heathrow' – the self-styled home of the Fleet Air Arm at Camp Bastion (there are still 'eye-in-the-sky' Sea Kings flying over Helmand) – began the challenging task of moving all the relevant kit and caboodle home.

Some of the detachment's vehicles, as well as their offices and infrastructure have been handed over to remaining Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan) units, but otherwise it was a case of 'return and stow all gear' in good Royal Navy tradition.

Given the size of the task, it demanded the time and energy of every member of CHF based at Bastion.

Each helicopter had to be specially prepared for transport in the back of a giant C17 transporter and the ten-hour flight back to the UK.

A team of seven personnel spent two days on each Sea King removing the tail rotor blades and antennae, fuel was drained and any secret kit aboard removed.

Finally, each six-tonne Sea King was 'bug bombed' – decontaminated to ensure that any of the micro organisms native to Helmand didn't make the leap from Afghanistan to Blighty and cause havoc with the UK's ecosystem.

With the aircraft safely stowed, the nice folk from the RAF flew them back to Brize Norton, where there was a specialist team to re-assemble the Sea Kings with all the relevant kit removed or stowed during transport. Finally, CHF crews jumped back in the cockpit and flew the helicopters on the final 70 miles of their marathon journey.

Now back at base, the Sea Kings are resuming their more usual role as the airborne workhorses in support of 3 Commando Brigade, which itself has just returned from Afghanistan.

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill, CHF



Bangor's duty done

AS HMS Liverpool enjoyed a thunderous welcome in Portsmouth, her erstwhile companion through the second half of Operation Unified Protector was also homeward-bound.

With the Libya mission declared completed as of October 31, HMS Bangor too began the journey back from the Med after 120 days and 12,000 miles on patrol.

Under Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Neil Marriott, the Sandown-class ship scoured miles of seabed off Libya as the battle between rebels and pro-Gaddafi forces raged.

Her painstaking work led to her finding a 2,400-pound (1,100kg) mine and a torpedo lying on the ocean floor off the key port of Tobruk in eastern Libya.

Both were safely destroyed using the ship's Seafox underwater drone, armed with explosive charges.

"We were hunting for mines from June, working from port to port, and a success like that meant shipping into Libya is that much safer," said Lt Cdr Marriott.

"To find two pieces of ordnance and destroy them safely was a great result for my ship's company."

Bangor did not lose a single day's work to defects or breakdown during the summer, despite sailing hundreds of miles at a time and working round the clock.

She was bound for NATO tasking in the North Sea at first, but reacted quickly to the higher-priority mission in the Mediterranean.

"When we're minehunting we have several people watching the screens for any contact," said ops room supervisor PO Steve 'Stirling' Moss.

"On the Tobruk task we saw several items which looked about the size of a mine, and two of them turned out to be real."

"It's not a regular thing to happen, so we're really pleased we found them and we were able to destroy them."

After Colonel Gaddafi fell, the operational pace dropped, and Bangor was able to complete the final minehunting task into Sirte – the last bastion of forces who sided with the deposed dictator – before beginning the long road home to Faslane.

She stopped in Gibraltar off southern Spain last weekend, where sailors were invited to run to the top of the Rock ahead of a remembrance service where a wreath was laid at the territory's Cenotaph.

"For many of the ship's company it has been their first deployment and the first time away from home, friends and family," said Lt Cdr Marriott.

"Each and every one of us is looking forward to a warm welcome in base port and to being reunited with loved ones before spending Christmas at home for some well-deserved rest and relaxation."



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Wildcat gets its sea legs

THIS is a sight to warm the cockles of any Naval aviator's heart: the first landing of the Fleet Air Arm's next-generation helicopter on a ship at sea.

Noon precisely in Lyme Bay on Monday November 7 2011 and a Wildcat touches down on the vast flight deck of RFA Argus.

The helicopter is the 21st Century replacement for the Lynx which has served the Navy so well since the 1970s.

The landing on Argus heralded four weeks of 'operating limit trials' for the Wildcat, which will lay the foundations for flying the new helicopter when it enters front-line service.

Wildcat takes the best bits of the Lynx design, incorporating them in an entirely new airframe, added cutting-edge enhancements – new sensors, avionics and weapons – to give the Navy a souped-up, nimble, helicopter with added punch well into the middle of the century.

A team from AgustaWestland, the Yeovil firm which builds the Lynx, Wildcat experts from the Aircraft Test and Evaluation Centre at Boscombe Down, plus RN air engineers and technicians joined Argus for the trials.

It fell to Lt Cdrs Robert Dowdell and Lee Evans to make the historic flight – assisted (and observed – hence this evocative black and white photograph from Lt Ed Barham) by a Lynx Mk8 of 815 Naval Air Squadron, which will get its hands on Wildcat in a little over two years' time.

"This marks a significant milestone in the life of Wildcat," said Lt Cdr Rob Taylor, Commanding Officer of 700W Naval Air Squadron – the trials unit set up at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset specifically to

bring the new aircraft into service.

"The deck landing's the first in a series of trials which will see Wildcat cleared to operate on all classes of Royal Navy and RFA ships in all theatres of the world."

Wildcat is bristling with new sensors and kit – improved radar, improved communications suite, more powerful engines, more firepower, and a 'glass' cockpit with four large display screens replacing the older dials and screens.

The cockpit's layout has been heavily influenced by input from the pilots and observers to allow them to find, collate and report contacts on sea or land rapidly.

At the same time, engineers should find the Wildcat easier to maintain – which means the aircraft will have an even higher rate of availability than the already-reliable Lynx.

The first of 28 Fleet Air Arm Wildcats arrives at Yeovilton, home of the Navy's entire Lynx force, in January 2013, when the team at 700W will determine how aircrews will operate the helicopter on deployment.

At the same time, a training course will be designed ahead of the first Wildcat crews converting from the existing Lynx joining 702 NAS, the Lynx operational training unit, in January 2014.

From there the qualified fliers will move to the front-line Lynx squadron, 815, which provides frigates, destroyers and the Navy's ice patrol ships with a dedicated Flight – helicopter plus air and ground crew – for their global deployments.

The first Wildcat Flight is earmarked to deploy in 2015.



Kan-do attitude

HELLO, yes, I've got someone here on the bridge of RFA Diligence with headlamps for eyes and an oversized helmet... I think they're a bit suspicious...

An Indian sailor checks the papers of a suspect aboard the floating repair shop at the height of exercises involving the two nations off the coast of Goa.

The annual Konkan exercise, run since 2004 and occasionally staged in UK waters, returned to the coast for which it is named with Diligence, hunter-killer submarine HMS Turbulent and the UK Maritime Battle Staff from Whale Island in Portsmouth providing the British contingent...

...and the frigate INS Betwa, a diesel boat INS Shankush, Sea King helicopters and Il-38 maritime patrol aircraft plus staff officers were the Indians' principal players.

With the actors in place, the curtain was raised on Konkan against the backdrop of Goa's stunning beaches and lush landscape, with exercises, discussions and planning before the drama moved out to sea for the main act and dénouement.

The main act was two days of 'scripted serials' – ie participants knew what was going to happen and when.

Diligence and Betwa put to sea demonstrating their damage control and firefighting abilities, while the two submarines stalked their 'prey', tracking their movements and working up their respective crews.

Next up, boarding operations training with Diligence acting as a smuggler and Betwa – a 4,500-tonne anti-submarine frigate based on a British stretched Leander-class – in pursuit.

She dispatched a Sea King and two fully-armed boarding teams to bring the RFA to heel; the latter stormed Diligence – which is chiefly performing the role of a submarine support ship for T-boats sent to this part of the world – and conducted a thorough search.

"The team came on to the ship quickly and efficiently and although they were courteous, we were in no doubt of their capability," said Capt Charles Simmonds RFA, Diligence's Commanding Officer.

"We've practised boarding operations before and the team from Betwa impressed with their professional and thorough approach. It was a pleasure working with them."

While the skimmers were wrapped up in board and search, the boats were playing their favourite game of cat and mouse as Turbulent went a-hunting.

Turbs is big, powerful and can patrol pretty much indefinitely thanks to her nuclear power, while the Shankush has to 'snort' to recharge her batteries regularly. She is, however, small, agile

and very, very quiet.

So game on, then, as the hunter-killer went off hunting (but thankfully not killing).

There are still quite a few diesel boat veterans in the Silent Service 17 years after the last, Unicorn, paid off – among them Turbulent's CO Cdr Ryan Ramsey.

He was assisted in the chase by an Indian staff officer who joined the Trafalgar-class submarine for the duration of the exercise.

And lest it be thought Turbs had it all her own way, the Indians sent aloft their Il-38 aircraft bristling with radar, sonar buoys and magnetic anomaly detectors in a bid to find 280ft and 5,200 tonnes of sleek black messenger of death lurking some 150 miles off the Goan coast.

"Konkan has been one of the highlights of the deployment," said Cdr Ramsey.

"The formidable Indian Navy forces that participated allowed us to hone our skills in a most demanding environment."

With the 'scripted' part of Konkan done, the free play began – the participants were given general objectives as Diligence needed escorting into a port while a rogue state and its submarine, played by the Shankush, tried to sink it.

The Maritime Battle Staff shared their expertise with the Indians on involving a British nuclear boat in a co-ordinate submarine hunt, sending Turbulent ahead to scour the ocean for the Shankush while on the surface the Betwa did the same and the Il-38 and Sea Kings looked down from Goan skies.

With the shield in place, the diesel boat never had a look in.

And that was Konkan 11. It left participants on both sides very pleased with the outcome – although the kit of the respective navies differ, they have similar traditions and, said Cdr Mark 'H' Honnoraty, head of the Battle Staff contingent, "numerous close similarities. On many occasions, we've been impressed by their tactical knowledge and ability."

For Cdr Ramsey, Konkan was "a fantastic opportunity on every level."

"Alongside the obvious training benefits from such an exercise it was the strengthening of ties between the two nations and their Navies that was obviously appreciated."

"In times where a common and menacing piracy and security threat exists in the Indian Ocean the partnership is welcome. Two nations' forces rapidly developed into one force – swift, decisive, resolute."

And for the Indians? A parting message from Capt Bahl, Betwa's Commanding Officer, to his British comrades will suffice:

"Thank you all for being part of this exercise and making it a roaring success. We all look forward to working with you again. Happy hunting."



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‘Dwarfed into insignificance...’

ORDINARILY, we wouldn’t label Her Majesty’s Ship Edinburgh small and insignificant.

But set against the vastness and magnificence of God’s creation – represented here by the canals of Patagonia – the Fortress of the Sea is dwarfed by Nature.

It was here that her South Atlantic deployment transformed into a Pacific deployment (briefly) – and a welcome change in the weather.

After two months of being battered by the ‘steep Atlantick’ – wind, snow and treacherous sea states – arrival in the Strait of Magellan brought a very welcome improvement.

As LA(Phot) Kyle Heller’s photograph shows, the sea was a mill pond, the wind dropped (unusually for Patagonia) and the sun brought warmth and habitability back to parts of ship.

On entering the Strait at sunrise, the ship’s company were able to take in views of oil rigs silhouetted on the horizon. Further up the channel, they were treated to the beautiful and spectacularly picturesque snow-capped forest-covered mountains, endless islands and valleys, glacial landscapes and fjords.

Not that there was much sightseeing as such on the bridge: the team had to navigate ‘the old fashioned way’, reverting to paper charts throughout the entire channel.

“I felt immensely fortunate to be able to experience the Patagonia transit; it really is a once-in-a-lifetime experience,” said Lt Paul A’Hern, Edinburgh’s Officer of the Watch 3.

“The scenery was breathtaking; we were dwarfed into insignificance by the spectacular snow-capped peaks.”

From canals natural to one man-made. After steaming up the west coast of South America, it was time to return to the Atlantic courtesy of the world’s most famous path between the oceans: the Panama Canal.

The approach to Panama presented sights as different as they were fascinating to the ship’s company: at sunrise, sailors awoke to an impressive scene of sky-scrapers rising behind misty, jungle-covered hills and mountains with winding palm-lined roads of Panama City in the midst of haze and humidity.

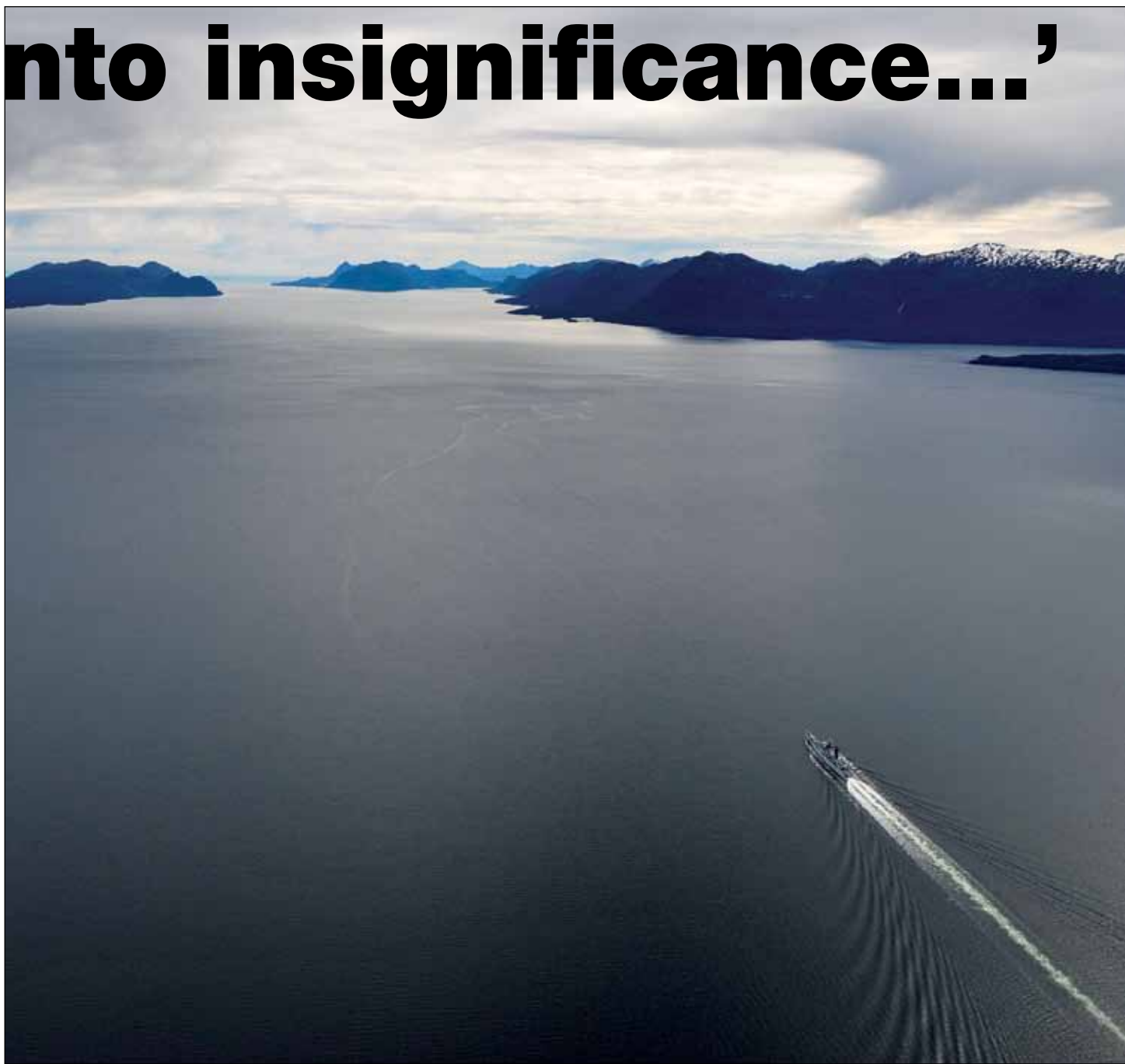
It was an impressive sight made more so by the magnificent Bridge of the Americas spanning the entire width of the canal and the vast numbers of vessels at anchor resembling a Fleet Review.

“Having spent the majority of the last four months sailing in vast open spaces of the Southern Ocean, it was almost surreal to see Edinburgh entering such confined waters and being guided through the lock chambers by electric locomotive engines called ‘mules’,” said Lt Cdr Stuart Parry, the Type 42’s logistics officer.

“As the locks filled with water, the ship was lifted 26 metres (85ft) and the passage through the well-buoyed channel was similar to heading down a runway at night... without taking off at the end, of course!”

After a ten-hour night passage, the ship emerged from the canal ready for ‘just another day’ – this time counter-drug operations in the Caribbean.

“Transiting both the Patagonian Channels and the Panama Canal has been a personal highlight of my time in command – both had their navigational and seamanship challenges, but it is testament to the enduring standards of our training that Edinburgh can operate in unusual areas and in such busy and confined waters, effectively and safely,” said Cdr Paul Russell, Edinburgh’s CO.



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A FORCE FOR GOOD



● The Christmas cards available from the RNBT

Think festive with the RNBT

JOLLY Jack, Jenny and Royal are delivering Christmas greetings from the RNBT, with a new release of Christmas cards. Each pack of eight cards features four festive designs – all for just £4.75 (plus postage and packing).

The cards (plus several other excellent gift ideas) are available online at www.rnbt.org.uk or by calling 023 9268 0112.

The Naval charity has benefited from a donation of £1,000 from the dedicated military charity, The Baton – designed to represent the nation's support for our forces and as a symbol of national conscience.

The Baton itself, crafted from the handle of a stretcher, has been until recently used in Helmand, Afghanistan. Carved into the item are the words: "Brave men and women are defending our nation's rights. It is their right to be the best trained, equipped, supported and as well cared for as possible. It is their right to be looked after if injured in battle when they return home."

Find out more online at www.thebaton.co.uk



● The Who wants to be a millionaire? Remembrance special participants: Sgt Derek 'Dutch' Holland of the RAF, TV and radio presenter Melanie Sykes, Maj Nicola McCullough of the Army, host Chris Tarrant, comic actor John Thomson, Lt Gary Beels of the RN and actor Hugh Bonneville

Military millionaires

ACTOR Hugh Bonneville stepped up to the plate for the Royal Navy in a special *Who wants to be a millionaire?* Remembrance edition on ITV1.

The actor, whose recent roles include *Downton Abbey's* Lord Grantham and a pirate captain in *Doctor Who*, was paired with Lt Gary Beels, a Health Physicist in the Medical Services branch, whose most recent posting was a six-month tour in Afghanistan.

The duo, who were raising money for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, made a confident start to proceedings, rattling through the questions.

However as they started to approach the £50,000 mark they had used their lifelines and ran up against a £75,000 question about a medical syndrome

named after Lewis Carroll's *Alice*.

Wisely the men decided to bank the money they had earned, and the RNRMC has gained £50,000 to support RN and RM personnel and veterans.

■ If you're short of a Christmas present idea and feeling generous, the luxury goods crafter Pemberton and Milner have created a Military Monopoly Ultra Luxe (only £3,500) or simply Luxe (merely £1,495) with tri-Service boards and pieces.

These sets offer the unique chance to buy RAF Brize Norton or re-mortgage the MOD...

Fifteen per cent of proceeds will go to the RNRMC, ABF The Soldiers' Charity and the RAF Benevolent Fund.

A racier BAFTAS

YOU'VE heard of the BAFTAS – the British film and television awards – now meet the BAFTAS, the British Armed Forces Families Thanks and Awareness Sunday.

It was held on Sunday November 20 at Exeter Racecourse, which dedicated its race day to the Armed Forces and invited members of the Royal British Legion and the Services to a day at the races.

The race day was organised for the Forces and their families and was also a fundraiser for Help for Heroes. As well as exciting races, off the track there was a mascot race, a climbing wall, a Challenger II tank to view and the chance to send messages to family members serving in Afghanistan through the British Forces Broadcasting Service.

Exeter Racecourse's general manager, Alice Everitt, said: "With numerous Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and Air Force bases in the West Country within easy reach of the racecourse, we thought it was a great opportunity to show our support for our troops."



● The Commando challengers amid their gruelling efforts

Picture: PO Phot Sean Clee

Commando epic for children's charities

DIAMONDS – the hardest substance known to man.

A Royal Marines PTI – the hardest man known to man?

The PTIs of Commando Training Centre RM at Lympstone have a strong claim to that title after their superhuman efforts for children's charities.

Five Royal Marines (and one from the Army, we should add) completed all four elements of the Commando tests within a 24-hour period, the first time it has been done, they believe.

The tests are normally undertaken by recruits over the course of a week, allowing some recovery time. On completion, successful trainees are eligible for the coveted green beret.

Passing the tests in a week is a tall order. Doing it in 24 hours requires someone special...

So step forward the Commando clubbers, who put in plenty of training before they tackled the 'Ultimate Commando Challenge'.

Even so, the challenge – a one-mile Tarzan assault course (around 13 minutes), a nine-mile speed march (90 minutes), a 6.5-mile endurance course (73 minutes) and a 30-miler on Dartmoor (eight hours) in the same gear that the recruits carry – was a tough one to crack, especially with poor weather for the 30-miler.

"This has been an absolute epic," said Sgt Les Barrow RM, one of the five finishers.

"It's one of those things that seemed a good idea at the time.

Having done the Tarzan course at the centre, they had to get to Woodbury Common – 11 miles from camp – for the next phase, returning after nightfall.

They immediately went out to complete the speed march along dark country lanes, allowing themselves five hours sleep before travelling to Dartmoor for the sting in the tail – the 30-mile march in full kit carrying 30lb of equipment.

Event co-ordinator and participant C/Sgt Baz Colarusso RM was a tired man at the finishing line, but said: "This has been great – all the lads have bonded really well and showed true Commando spirit throughout."

They crossed the finishing line near Princetown with barely seconds to spare.

"There were times on the 30-miler when it was looking beyond us but we dug in deep and kept going. The things we do for charity..." added Baz.

Their challenge won some celebrity backing, including adventurer Bear Grylls, who described the event as "an epic challenge even by Royal Marines' standards.

"I admire these guys' commitment to achieve something extraordinary in an effort to make a difference to many families' lives."

The five have raised more than £10,000 for Children in Need and the RN&RM Children's Fund, but there is still time to add to the total at www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/4testchallenge

And just spare a thought for the sixth challenger, who was forced to drop out of the event during the final test. That was pretty hard as well.

Equal rights for calendar boys

IN OCTOBER we featured the WAGS calendar, now it's their other halves' turn, for back by overwhelming public demand is the Go Commando calendar, featuring some of the most photogenic men in the Corps.

Debbie Tyler-Davis, PR and Events Manager for the charity Go Commando, who organised the photo-shoots (well, someone had to do it – Man Ed) said:

We loved the calendar, you loved it, everybody loved it. So, following the huge success of our 2011 offering we just had to give it another go. It all evolved from the seed of an idea two years ago. Why not use the physical attributes of the Royal Marines in a fund-raising scheme?

They may have been nervous young men at first but over the two days of the shoot they gained in confidence. They knew they would receive merciless stick from their mates, yet they let us use our creative talents to produce a fantastic calendar.

It was all in support of a very good cause and managed to generate almost £17,000 which in turn has enabled us to deliver on our promise to support their families.

Now we've stepped up a gear and searched far and wide for the very best Marine models and we gave ourselves an extra day on location. We think you'll love the 2012 calendar even more than last year. At least we hope so.

Our Royal Marines heroes appearing on the calendar never thought they would see this type of action when they signed up. Several of these young men said a tour of combat duty in Afghanistan was less nerve-racking than being subjected to the scrutiny of thousands of lustful ladies' eyes.

Two pin-ups, Ricardo Chin (June) and John Salisbury (July), were told by senior officers they had to take part and we all know a Marine never disobeys an order.

Meanwhile, cover-boy John Richardson (pictured) faced an even more fearsome grilling – from his mum – after initially refusing. He claimed he had rugby training when the shoot was taking place but eventually relented.

Kunle Atiba (November) thought he had done his bit last year but just happened to be walking past the gym at Norton Manor camp, near Taunton, in Somerset, during shooting – and got dragged in again.

Tom Lockyer (December) already cops endless flak from his comrades in arms for looking like Justin Beiber and Nick Wright (February) showed his soft side in an out-take when his little girl poured a bottle of water over his head.

Max Carter (January) led a former existence as a stockbroker and even qualified online as a priest.

His wife Razi commented: "When hearing Go Commando were looking for lads for the 2012 calendar, I didn't have to think twice about nominating Max.

"Like any marine, Max is always happy to get his top off, especially when a camera is involved. When telling him he'd been picked to have his picture taken he thought I was joking, but he was more than happy to take part as it's all for a



worthy cause".

Father-of-four John Jefferies was nominated by his wife and is proudly displayed in March, the month of his birthday. John will deploy to Afghanistan with the unit next year.

Charlene Jefferies told us: "John took the whole thing well and was prepared for the banter he knew he was going to get from his fellow marines. However all joking aside, he did fit in a few extra gym sessions before he got in front of the camera!"

Both Razi and Charlene encourage anyone and everyone to get behind the charity, show your support and you could even have their men hanging around in your house next year, well at least for a month.

The models came primarily from 40 Commando RM which gave birth to the Go Commando charity in 2010 when it was deployed to Afghanistan, and 42 Commando RM, RM Poole, RM Commando Helicopter Force and the RM Recruiting Troop.

Sean O'Brien, who founded Go Commando, said: "The demands of Service life are unrelenting and the pressures on not just the Marines but also their loved ones is tremendous.

"We recognise the vital support role they play while their men are on active service or away training and aim to provide as much support for the families as possible where and when we can.

"With the money we raise from sales of the calendar we hope to continue to provide better facilities and help, on all sorts of levels, to make life a little bit more bearable for those back at home.

"There is a serious side to all this fun and flesh. Our aim this time is to top £30,000, which will make a huge difference to a lot of lives and help enormously with our charity objectives.

"So, please do show your support for the Royal Marines family."

You can order through the website www.gocommando.org.uk.

Middleton makes Channel splash

HMS Middleton may be in the Gulf, but her Marine Engineering department managed to 'swim' the English Channel.

During a busy maintenance period, the ten-strong team swam a total of 1,600 lengths in a swimming pool in Bahrain.

The stokers swam in a continuous relay, in a time of six hours 25 minutes, to raise money for Cancer Research UK.

The stokers of Crew 8 chose the charity because most people have been affected by cancer in some way or another; this fact was

brought home to them recently when one of them lost his mum to it.

They have raised over £1,000 so far, with the final total yet to be calculated.

The event took place with the kind assistance of the British Club Bahrain whose pool was used to conduct the event.

HMS Middleton is currently based in the Gulf conducting Maritime Security Operations and training with coalition forces and Gulf Cooperation Council Nations.

Let the world remember

FRESH from another tour of duty in Afghanistan, Royal Marines from 45 Commando have opened a garden of remembrance to honour their fallen comrades.

The woodlands garden at RM Condor remembers all men from the unit lost since it moved to Arbroath in 1971.

The wintry skies and the plummeting temperatures were reminder enough for the majority of 45 Commando personnel that they were back at RM Condor in Arbroath.

The oppressive 50-degree heat, the dust and the danger of the Nad-e-Ali district in Helmand... all were fading memories as life at the Royal Marines' base got back to normal.

But for all personnel within the tight-knit community that is 45 Commando there was a special reason to reflect on this homecoming, from what was their fourth tour of duty to Afghanistan.

For the Woodlands Garden project – the groundwork for which had been under way when the unit deployed back in March – was complete and ready to be unveiled by Commanding Officer, Lt Col Oliver Lee.

The initiative, project-managed by the base's Second-in-Command, Capt Steve Lewis RM, and supported by a host of local organisations, both civilian and military – including wounded personnel at 45 Commando – was to provide a focal point for remembrance and reflection at RM Condor.

The unit lacked such a facility and the project was timely, given the operational burden shouldered by 45 Commando in recent years. The centrepiece of the garden – which was designed



by BBC celebrity gardener Toby Buckland – is an eight-tonne granite memorial stone.

This impressive monolith, however, serves a sombre and yet proud purpose: for it bears, hewn in stone, the names of the men of 45 Commando who have died in the last four decades. Among them, the 13 fatalities suffered on Operation Herrick.

Such a bitter toll was avoided on Operation Herrick 14 and for that, all at the unit are

thankful. But for the wounded, the bereaved plus commando veterans alike, the Woodlands Garden now offers a poignant, peaceful place for reflection.

Lt Col Lee welcomed around 70 guests to the Officers Mess and treated them to a moving presentation which told the story of 45 Commando's deployment to Nad-e-Ali and the success they enjoyed while in Helmand.

Not just in terms of bringing everyone back alive, but also in

breaking what 45 Commando's CO called "the cycle of violence" in that war-torn country.

By breaking that cycle violent incidents had fallen by nearly 90 per cent compared with the previous summer.

The transformation of what was the old commanding officer's kitchen garden into the Woodlands Garden took almost a year and cost around £250,000, the majority of which was raised by the men themselves and

through donations by a supportive and appreciative county of Angus community.

Other massive rocks dominate the Garden, which has been designed to replicate the Globe and Laurel emblem so central to the Royal Marines ethos.

Despite overwhelming logistic problems, these rocks were shipped from each of the lands where 45 Commando men have fallen: Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Kosovo, Iraq and

Afghanistan.

Each represents a physical manifestation of the locations that have taken a heavy toll on the commando unit.

Lt Col Lee's closing remarks perfectly captured the essence of the Garden when he said: "Being a Royal Marine is the ordinary man's way of doing something extraordinary."

"But the tragedy of that is some men have to lay down their lives for their brothers-in-arms."

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It never r



SCOURING a village for a group of suspected insurgents is not an easy task.

Doing it in heavy, cold rain does not make it any more appealing.

And even when the downpour relents, a car crash which reveals an illegal weapon just adds to the workload.

But the workforce in this case is three dozen Royal Marines officers in the final stages of their training, so all sorts of mayhem is tackled and sorted with an air of quiet, calm professionalism which bodes well for future bootneck operations.

To get to this stage requires a unique blend of abilities, from strategic nous to sheer bloody-minded endurance (the commando tests really sort the men from the boys).

Just over 60 likely lads – including a handful of overseas candidates – joined the 60-week course in late summer 2010, and as they enter the final straight (the course finishes early this month) 36 were still standing, not a bad return for a course which can experience up to 60 per cent attrition.

And the expectation is that, barring injury, all would succeed –

A wide-ranging exercise in the South-West provides the final tick in the box for trainee Royal Marines officers. Mike Gray sees them rise to the challenge

it is rare for a trainee to get this far then fall by the wayside, although one failed to reach the standards required at this stage last year.

In order to get to what is effectively a confirmation exercise (though woe betide anyone who does not treat it with total respect and commitment) the prospective officers will have done everything the Commando recruits have to do, and a good deal more.

And whereas the recruits face the dreaded commando tests at the end of their training, these chaps took the same test this summer, leaving time at the end of the course to continue to develop as officers.

This 11-day exercise has two distinct parts.

The first, over three days, sees the young officers (YOs) set up a forward operating base (FOB) in the village of Lymstone, close to the Commando Training Centre RM (CTCRM).

They know there is something in the air (apart from the rain), because there are believed to be insurgents active in the area.

Having set up base in the village's Scout hut, kindly handed

over to the CTCRM team by the 1st Lymstone Sea Scouts, the fledgling officers must then organise and carry out patrols in the sure knowledge that something or someone will liven things up sooner or later.

The students get the opportunity to lead and to act as part of the team – a team which has been forged from a disparate intake.

Maj Alex Maclay, on exchange from the Royal Anglian Regiment, is a training officer with the YO programme.

"They tend to drop out of the course in a trickle," he said.

"People realise that this career isn't for them, and there are also injuries – backs, breaks and so on. It is an arduous course..."

"Membership of the course is made up of a number of groups."

"There are those joining with no military experience, some joining with experience of the Royal Marines Reserves, or the Officer Training Corps, the Territorial Army."

"Then there are the guys who have been in the Corps and who have taken their commission."

"We have four of those guys who have done recruit training, maybe done a few years with their unit and decided to apply for a commission."

"The first few weeks of the YO's course is easier for them, but the rest catch up."

"By this stage you cannot tell who is who."

"Around 40 per cent of recruits have the qualifications



● Trainee Royal Marines officers patrol the village of Lymstone and investigate a road traffic accident during one of the final exercises on their 60-week course at the Commando Training Centre

Pictures (and headline): PO(Phot) Sean Clee, thrice RN Photographer of the Year



ains but it pours...

to undertake officer training, but choose not to."

YO training follows key paths, with leadership being the fundamental business of the course.

Allied to that is physical fitness, leading up to the commando test. Supporting those is the academic side of the course.

Candidates learn about strategy, they study at Dartmouth, undertake staff rides and have to prepare and deliver presentations on classic examples of amphibious warfare, such as the Falklands and the Pacific campaign of World War 2.

Among the staff rides the Normandy beaches feature heavily, allowing students to study the progress of the D-Day campaign.

"This final exercise is based on counter-insurgency," said Maj Maclay.

"The scenario we have developed is that a bit of insurgency has filtered down to here from Salisbury Plain, and we think there is an insurgents cell in Lympstone village.

"They have got to be able to work in proximity to local people – a huge element of counter-insurgency and something we cannot replicate in normal training areas.

"This is the second time we have used Lympstone, so everyone has experienced it before.

"We started liaising with the village authorities in January, and from May it has gradually built up.

"We have put out information to villagers on the local websites and in the local paper, we attended a parish meeting which had the exercise on the agenda, and we held briefing at the local school.

"There are signs out today with my mobile number on if anyone needs to contact us."

The first day of the exercise is a thoroughly damp affair.

The young officers plan their patrols in the scout hut near the village railway station while in Lympstone itself people go about their normal business.

Members of the village theatre group, the Lympstone Players, break off from rehearsals for this year's pantomime – the suitably nautical *Robinson Crusoe and the Pirates* – to act as leading civic figures, while staff from CTC skulk around the village acting suspiciously like insurgents.

"It is a European-based scenario, featuring low-level counter-insurgency – a lower level than you would find in operations in Afghanistan," said Maj Maclay.

"It is supporting the police and authorities to try to counter the insurgents."

Devon and Cornwall Police, in the shape of Exmouth PCs Simon Evans and Sarah Trayhurn, are supporting the exercise, providing local knowledge – "I know him, he's okay... this is where the mayor lives... I don't recognise him..."

And finally it is time for action.

The 36 trainees have been split into three patrols of 12, with the role of troop commander changing regularly to allow everyone a chance in charge.

As they comb the outskirts of Lympstone, there is the rather incongruous sight of Royal Marines with weapons and full battle kit in close proximity to the No 57 bus from Exeter and a red telephone box, all in a steady autumn downpour.

Besides the scout hut, other Lympstone facilities were used by

scenario planners to add realism.

The school – closed for half term – and an empty married quarters home were used for searches, while the Swan Inn was the site of a snatch, when a suspected insurgent had to be tackled.

The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service also played their part, working alongside the young officers when a road traffic accident in the village took a sinister turn with the discovery of weapons in the crashed car.

Maj Maclay said: "On the whole the village is very supportive of the exercise and give us relatively free rein.

"But with a population of over 1,500 there are obviously going to be some who perhaps do not want to expose their children to Royal Marines carrying guns around their village.

"We try to leave some areas untouched – we do not go near the playground, for example, or where children may be attending clubs."

For the YOs, the next stop after Lympstone village was Salisbury Plain, and the chance to test their leadership skills with a troop of Royal Marines recruits and a troop of Dutch marines YOs who are halfway through their own training course.

And with the course ending early this month, the various Commando units will be receiving their annual allotment of fresh faces just before Christmas leave.

For some, that opens the chance to cut their teeth as troop commanders in Afghanistan during their first year – a useful addition to the CV.

And for the record, all 36 survived the exercise, but as *Navy News* went to press one more YO had withdrawn from the course.





● Sailors rehearse at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth for Remembrance ceremonies

Picture: LA(Phot) Jason Ballard

Naval Service remembers

WHETHER on familiar territory at home, or in some far-flung country or sea, the Naval Service united with the nation to reflect on sacrifices past and present.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams travelled to RNAS Yeovilton, where he was guest of honour for the Somerset air station's annual act of remembrance.

During the service in the serene setting of the churchyard of St Bartholomew's Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church, the roll of honour was read out by Base Warrant Officer, WO1 Steve Uzzell, detailing all Royal Naval and Royal Marines personnel who have lost their lives in the past year.

In his address, Dr Williams said that over the past decade, the men and women of our Armed Forces had been "sent to distant parts of the globe, to unfamiliar cultures locked in quarrels and conflicts about which we know very little."

"And the Armed Forces have been asked to go to these places and take exactly the same risks that they would take for comrades, for family, or for country."

"What has become one of the most complex but also one

of the most extraordinary things about military service in our own generation is that our Forces have taken risks for the sake of strangers.

"They have taken risks not because people are friends, but in order that they might become friends."

"Our Forces have been at work, not only in the great theatres of Iraq and Afghanistan, but in many other places too, in order to make friends – in order to build harmony and trust between peoples in an age of deep anxiety and instability."

A veteran Swordfish torpedo bomber from the RN Historic Flight flew past the churchyard as a Royal Marines bugler played the Last Post; November 11 is the anniversary of the Swordfish's finest hour – the crippling of the Italian Fleet at Taranto in 1940.

Eighty miles south-west, in the shadow of the Naval memorial on Plymouth Hoe, hundreds of sailors and Royal Marines paid their respects with veterans, politicians and civic leaders.

Representatives from HMS Drake, the RFA, 3 Commando Brigade and 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, plus the Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth attended, with Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone, Flag

Officer Sea Training, laying a wreath on behalf of the Senior Service.

"At this very special time of remembrance I find myself caught between two emotions," said the admiral. "First and most powerful is the deepest respect and reverence of those who have served and have made the ultimate sacrifice."

"Indeed, there is no word that captures the impact of this recognition and the thanks for those who have laid their lives for their country and the endeavour that it is set upon."

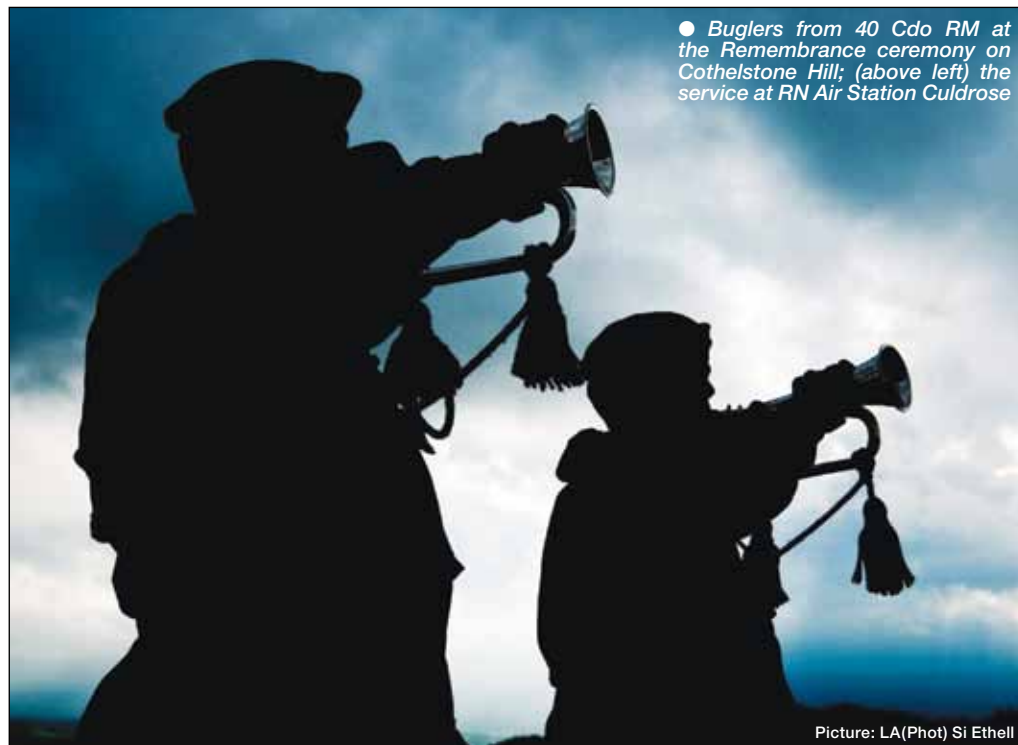
"I do have a second emotion, and this is the thanks for our current Servicemen and Servicewomen, especially those of the Naval Service who are working under such pressure across the world, looking after our security and our interests."

"They stand very proudly in the shadow of those who have gone before."

The Remembrance parade at RN Air Station Culdrose was led by CO Capt William Entwisle, and during the service at the base's masthead wreaths were laid by Capt Entwisle, the President of the WOs&SRs Mess, a junior rating, the Mayor of Helston, the Royal Naval Association, the Association of Wrens, the Royal British Legion, the Territorial Army, the RAF Association, the Cornwall Association of Reserve and Retired Naval Officers, Cornwall Council, and Porthleven Town Council.

Along the South Coast in Portsmouth, there were services at its own Naval memorial, currently in the middle of a restoration project, on Southsea Common; in Guildhall Square, which was filled with hundreds of onlookers lining the steps and balconies; and at HMS Excellent in front of Leach Building, the headquarters of the Fleet and Royal Marines.

● Buglers from 40 Cdo RM at the Remembrance ceremony on Cothelstone Hill; (above left) the service at RN Air Station Culdrose



Picture: LA(Phot) Si Ethell



● HMS Montrose's Remembrance service is held in the Atlantic
Picture: Lt Hamish Walker

In the South Atlantic, HMS Montrose paid particular homage to her Scottish roots as her ship's company fixed Scottish poppies to their caps for a memorial service.

Unlike the Royal British Legion poppies, which feature two petals and a green leaf, Poppy Scotland poppies are distinguished by four petals; proceeds from their sale goes to veterans north of border, where one in five people is either a serving member of the Armed Forces, ex-Services or the spouse or dependant of someone who's been in the military.

Montrose was at sea 12 months ago for Armistice Day – then she was deterring piracy in the Indian Ocean and paid her respects at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

Twelve months on, and in a different ocean, charged with promoting British interests in the South Atlantic and providing reassurance to British citizens in the southern hemisphere, her ship's company paid their respects to those whose only grave is the sea.

In a service led by the ship's padre, chaplain Andrew Allcock, sailors formed up on the flight deck in the stifling heat before a wreath was cast into the water.

"Although we're far from home, it's vitally important for my ship's company to have the opportunity to join those back in the UK – and across the world – in marking Remembrance Sunday," said Montrose's CO Cdr Jonathan Lett.

In fact, being deployed on operations adds an element of poignancy, providing a direct link to those who have gone before us and allowing us to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice."

It was also hot for HMS St Albans, coming to the end of a six-month patrol in the Gulf, as she held a flight deck service on her way home to Portsmouth, while the ship which has replaced her, HMS Argyll, was also at sea.

Pausing her latest Gulf patrol, Argyll's sailors and Royal Marines listened as the roll of honour of the last 12 months' fallen was read out.

"I can think of no greater honour than to lead a Remembrance Service and, being at sea, while on active operations, it added a poignant edge to what is an already solemn occasion," said Cdr Paul Stroude, Argyll's CO.

"It always stirs powerful emotions for those serving in the Forces, it reminds us all of the sacrifice, not only of our brethren, but also of our loved ones back home."

In Bahrain, the hub of the Royal Navy's operations in the Gulf, there was a rather unusual ceremony aboard minehunter

HMS Pembroke.

The ship hosted three Chelsea Pensioners – despite the heat, they were in their characteristic scarlet coats – who were visiting the kingdom for November ceremonies and found the Sandown-class ship alongside undergoing a spot of maintenance.

The trio of former soldiers were shown round the ship, and although one of them, John McNaughton, had served for nearly two years in the region half a century ago as an Army diver, he declined the chance of a dip with Pembroke's divers with a wry smile as he had "left his swimming costume behind in his hotel."

The visit to the ship ended with the pensioners being hosted in the senior rates' mess for a spot of refreshments and a chinwag, and being presented with a bevy of cap tallies and a ship's badge for their new clubhouse.

WO2 Mark Hinton, Pembroke's marine engineer officer, said it had been "an absolute privilege" to host the veterans, and they hoped to take up the offer of a return visit to London in due course.

HMS Echo's Ship's Company took part in Remembrance ceremonies at Mombasa in Kenya – the survey ship was on a break from duties in the Indian Ocean, and apart from the ceremonies she also hosted Kenyan naval officers and ratings.

The first was at the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery, followed by a specific service in the chapel of the Mission to Seafarers for the nine sailors who died when HMS Brilliant's Lynx crashed on May 14 1989.

Back in Blighty, Rosyth-based reserve unit HMS Scotia provided a Naval guard commander – Lt Alastair Browne – for the

Remembrance ceremony in Edinburgh for the first time – a role usually taken up by the Army.

HMS Collingwood in Fareham held a service, and the Maritime Warfare School's ceremonial team also had the honour of marching the RN contingent into position at the Cenotaph in London for the national act of Remembrance.

Senior Naval officers also attended the other major national service, held at the Armed Forces Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum.

Sailors from HMS Raleigh in Cornwall took part in a service at Horson cemetery in Torpoint, at the graves of the 41 matelots and 21 Royal Engineers who died when a bomb hit their air raid shelter on April 28 1941.

A service was also held at the training establishment itself on Armistice Day.

Personnel from Clyde Naval Base and the HMS Neptune Volunteer Band gathered for a service at Hermitage Park in Helensburgh; other groups represented included the Sea Cadets, the RNA and the Submariners Association.

HMS Iron Duke's service was held on the frigate as she supported a specialist navigators course off the UK coast, and HMS Illustrious, at the buoy off Plymouth on a windy morning, took a break from Operational Sea Training to hold a service of remembrance on her flight deck.

In typical bootneck fashion, some 400 members of 40 Cdo RM combined some 'phys' with their Remembrance service by speed marching more than four miles from Norton Manor Camp to Cothelstone Hill then back again; the service ended with a fly-past by Lynx and Sea King helicopters.

● Personnel from HMS Raleigh parade to a service at Horson cemetery in Torpoint
Picture: Dave Sherfield



One charity for the whole of the Naval family



Liz's long burst

(Jackspeak: a lengthy conversation that is mostly one-way)

WELCOME to the regular feature of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

Having looked at all the good stories during 2011, I realised that this is not only a chance to reflect on these great activities but to take stock and review my first three months since joining the charity.

And... what a first three months! My first impression has been – what unbelievable willingness there is to support us.

This willingness is demonstrated day after day, by those who get involved to fundraise for us from everything from John O'Groats to Land's End bike rides and running marathons to beard shaves and leg waxing.

But my personal favourite – those who walked along the northwest coast of Scotland just to go to a pub, The Old Forge, for a pint – personally I would have needed more than the one...

There is also an outstanding willingness by the team here to support everyone and to ensure more and more money is raised, so that more and more grants can be awarded.

I have also been amazed at the breadth and variety of grants given out, from climbing walls and refurbishments of a submarine mess to a Summer Ball or Christmas Party.

But, of course, I can't forget the Benevolence aspects of our work and all the support we have provided to charities such as the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund and the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust and the many other recipients from Combat Stress to St Dunstan's.

It is all quite amazing.

But, it's not fair that I should sit at my desk planning strategy when I am encouraging all those around me to fundraise.

So by the time the next edition of the *Navy News* is published, I will have completed my own special fundraising activity.

I am not revealing the details, but a fashion catwalk, a paper dress and scissors... may be a clue.

Finally, what will 2012 bring... Well, more events and fundraising activities, a further Payroll Giving competition and a fundraising award.

In addition, we're planning a Naval Service-wide *Get Involved* campaign (you will have heard of other charities events – the Big Brew Up, the Largest Coffee Morning, among others) so the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity will launch our own version, and the more we all get involved, the more money we raise and...

I don't need to tell you the rest!

Liz Ridgway
Director of Fundraising and Marketing,
The Royal Navy
and Royal Marines Charity
liz.ridgway@rnmrc.org.uk

Where does your money go?

Each year, we grant out about £5 million. These grants include: paying into your ship, submarine, squadron or RM unit's welfare fund twice a year.

These were the minor grants awarded to the different establishments and ships from late October to November:

- 3 Cdo Brigade
- 42 Cdo RM
- 45 Cdo RM
- 30 Cdo IX RM
- FPGRM
- CTCRM
- 1 Assault Group RM
- 539 ASRM
- Corp Secretariat
- The five RM Bands
- CTCRM Band

- RMR London
- RM School of Music
- Cdo Log Reg
- RFA Cardigan Bay
- Outdoor Leadership TC
- Med Div/INM
- Maritime Reserves
- BRNC
- AFCO Preston
- Heron Volunteer Band
- HMS Brocklesby
- Total £54,000**

Many of the grants for this period were given to units that were deployed in Op Herrick in support of families days and homecomings.

For further information on grants contact Anne Carr by email at anne.carr@rnmrc.org.uk, or by phone

023 9254 8093, Mil: 93832 8093.

Payroll giving simply means making a regular donation out of your monthly pay.

We're asking for a minimum of £5 a month; if you can manage more, that's great.

We've seen an impressive uptake in numbers over the past year of 20 per cent which is fantastic, but we want to keep improving on these figures so that we can keep improving the lives of the men and women of the Naval Service.

■ Our barometer (right) shows the latest payroll giving figures and how far we have come in the past 12 months and what we hope to achieve with your support.



2011 in focus

IT'S BEEN a hectic year for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity with fundraising taking place around the country and around the globe.

However you too can play your part closer to home. The RNRMC Christmas card is now on sale and available to buy online.

You can see the main image on the card right, and really it says it all – sailors, smiles and Santa. Sorted.

Each pack costs just £5.99 for ten cards (plus £1 post and package), and can be bought on the charity's website at www.rnmrc.org.uk or from the charity itself, along with several other items that might inspire you for Christmas gifts.

Profits from the sale of all these items allow the charity to give a better quality of life for serving and former serving Naval and Marines personnel and their families.

Among other highlights of the past year that we should mention are the Bastion to Blighty medics who took the long way back from Afghanistan.

The team of medics, doctors and nurses (pictured right) raised over £4,000 for the three main Service charities during the recent Herrick 14 deployment. Over a six-month period, they used rowing machines, treadmills and static bikes to travel the 19,700-mile equivalent distance home.

The challenge was completed over the course of the six months, with everyone doing a stint of exercise after a demanding full shift at work.

Back in Blighty, down south a team of five from HMS Collingwood have set themselves the task of raising more than £10,000 for the RNRMC by taking part in a series of marathons, half-marathons and 10km runs (right).

Training establishment Collingwood also supports the RNRMC in a number of ways, from the Collingwood Open Day, fireworks displays, field gun, cycling and swimming events, and concerts by the Band of the Royal Marines, Collingwood.

And heading northwards, the Beat the Block challenge saw over 70 cyclists from the Aircraft Carrier Alliance race to beat the first completed block of the new Queen Elizabeth class carrier as it was towed from Glasgow to Rosyth (right).

This impressive challenge garnered a total of £35,000 for the RNRMC.

However these are just a few of the highlights of the past year; much more has been happening around the country to raise money for the RNRMC.

Take a look at the website, www.rnmrc.org.uk, for all the different fundraising activity that has taken place.

If you have a great fundraising idea, get in touch with Hilary Jukes: hilary.jukes@rnmrc.org.uk, 023 9254 8155



What we do

Dependants – In the event of death-in-service we provide immediate relief in the form of a grant of £12,000 within 48 hours to the dependant identified with the most need.

Benevolence – We meet an individual's need through the funding we give to specific Naval and military charities.

Amenities – We support the serving community in three ways: Operational grants – Every six months all operational units receive a grant for the Commanding Officer to use at their discretion for the welfare of their men and women; minor and major grants – We award substantial grants for equipment, facilities, families days and other team building events

Sport – Our sports charity funds 39 different Sporting Associations and enables our Olympic and Paralympic athletes to receive world class coaching

Prizes and Awards – We recognise professional excellence and achievement through the funds we make available to Commanding Officers.

Next month...

IN NEXT month's edition, you can find out the winners for the payroll giving competition – this is the ship or unit that has had the biggest swell in numbers for payroll giving.

We plan to run a feature on RNRMC grants to keep you up to date about how to apply and what happens in the background to each application.

We'll also be telling you the latest grants news.

To give more,
we need to raise more.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Sign up to the Payroll Giving Scheme
- Leave a legacy
- Organise your own fundraising event
- Spread the word

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity is a federation of subsidiary charities each of which has a specific focus and is supported by a central team.

CONTACT DETAILS

Naval Service Amenity Fund

Naval Service Benevolence Fund

Naval Service Dependants' Fund

Naval Service Prizes and Awards Fund

Fleet Air Arm Benevolent Trust

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Lt Cdr Katharine Rackham

Mr David Robinson

Cdre Mark Slawson

Lady Stanhope

Mr John Thompson MBE

BEM

Mr Hugh Twiss

WO1 (RSM) Ally McGill RM

Cdr Rosie Wilson OBE



Power show

THE ROYAL Navy's flagship has been demonstrating her current capabilities – and working towards adding even more weight to her 'punch'. Assault ship HMS Bulwark led the way during a series of high-profile all-action demonstrations held in the

pictures: la(photo) chilli carney, hms bulwark



Power sharing



solent for a very select audience.

Around 1,000 sailors and Royal Marines from across the Naval Service took part in the Maritime Combat Power Visit (MCPV), showing movers and shakers what the Royal Navy is capable of.

The four-day-long MCPV – the new name for Staff College Sea Days – the programme has been rebranded since last year – demonstrates how the RN carries out its business around the globe.

After a day of rehearsals on the Monday, the Visit began in earnest the following day, unfolding before the gallery of more than 300 students on the advanced command and staff at Shrivenham, the Forces' College, plus senior officers, academics, the media, MPs, affiliates and other VIP guests.

All the activity was choreographed by the Navy's training gurus, Devonport-based Flag Officer Sea Training or FOST.

The cast for the event was extensive but for the record, it included HMS Bulwark, landing support ship RFA Mounts Bay, frigate HMS Sutherland, small Fleet tanker RFA Black Rover, Archer-class patrol boat HMS Raider, Jungly Sea Kings from 16 Naval Air Squadron, Commando Lynx from 847 NAS, Naval Lynx from 815 NAS, Airborne Surveillance and Control (ASaC) Sea Kings from 19 NAS, Hawk jets, Commandos from the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines (FPGRM) and the amphibious wizardry of 539 Assault Squadron RM.

The Junglies and Fleet Protection Group teams staged a mock boarding, leaping out of a Sea King and roping on to Bulwark to show how they can take down pirates/terrorists – rather as they did in London when the ship visited at the beginning of the year.

Black Rover bowled along to demonstrate the tricky art of replenishing at sea (RASing), Sutherland showed how to deal with the threat of submarines, and Bulwark demonstrated how she can cut men and material on to hostile

shores by sending the Royal Marines and their kit on to Browndown Beach near Gosport, where a Viking from the Royal Marines' Armoured Support Group could be seen racing across the shingle (*above*).

The aim is to give visitors – and officers on the advanced staff course in particular – a small taste of the full range of the Senior Service's abilities.

And that full range would not be adequately spanned without the presence of a representative of the small-ship Navy, in this instance Bristol University RN Unit boat HMS Raider.

For her Commanding Officer, Lt Charlie Collins, it was a baptism of fire – and he was quick to make enemies.

When Raider sped out of the mouth of the Tamar *en route* for the Solent, Lt Collins was in only his third day at sea with his new command.

And the patrol boat's task in the MCPV was that of OPFOR – opposing force (aka 'the Enemy').

Lt Collins and his small crew set about the challenge with relish.

Directed to attack the task group entering the Solent from the east, Raider lurked within St Helens anchorage under cover of merchant shipping.

She then darted from her cover and headed at high speed towards Bulwark and her escorts, firing multiple rounds from her flying bridge as she manoeuvred in for the attack.

Raider attempted to get 'up-close and personal' with the fleet flagship, providing a vivid illustration of force protection in the littoral to the onlooking students and guests.

Raider, powered by two V12 diesel engines providing a top speed of 24 knots, and her sisters are versatile, so it is no surprise that they are called upon to undertake a variety of different tasks.

Raider's primary role is providing sea training to the students of Bristol, Bath and UWE Universities.

However, she also provides regular support to Flag Officer Sea Training

during Thursday Wars off Plymouth, Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth for regular IWOFF (Initial Warfare Officers Foundation course) navigation training, the Board and Search School at HMS Raleigh, sea training for the Sea Cadet Corps, and generally showing the White Ensign in ports and harbours where her bigger sisters cannot enter, both around the UK and on European coasts.

On completion of the MCPV, Lt Collins said: "Raider is made up of only five ship's company, and they have been selected individually for being the best at what they do – which is proven on days like today."

For HMS Sutherland the dash to the Solent started in London, following a high-profile visit to the capital – and she carried with her affiliates from the Honourable Company of Master Mariners for the journey.

With a large proportion of her ship's company living in Hampshire, a week 'day running' out of Portsmouth was a welcome change.

During the practice period – Days 1 and 2 – the ship took representatives from the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity, DES Ships Abbey Wood, Biggleswade Sea Cadet unit, Ryde School Sea Cadet Corps and Potential Officer Candidates to sea to give them the unique experience of life in a warship.

On Day 3 Sutherland welcomed nearly 300 members of the Defence Academy as they learned about the flexibility and capabilities of the Type 23 frigate, particularly in the context of the Royal Navy's Response Force Task Group – Sutherland has real current experience of this having spent four months of this year deployed on the Cougar 11 deployment with flagship HMS Albion.

Sutherland then detached to Operation Ellamy/Unified Protector off Libya, providing Naval Gunfire Support for Apache gunships operating from HMS Ocean.

Back in the Solent, Sutherland sailed on the afternoon of Day 3

to prepare for the main event the following day, which saw the frigate fire her main 4.5in gun, her 30mm gun system, and finish off with a boarding demonstration.

Visitors were apparently quite taken by the frigate's 'sports car' handling...

Commanding Officer Cdr Roger Readwin said: "Following a busy year deployed on live operations with the RFTG it has been a privilege to be able pass on our experience and help the future leaders of the UK military better understand the impressive capability of HMS Sutherland and her sister Type 23 frigates.

"I lead a proud crew who have the loving support of their families – they are the most important factor in delivering the winning edge."

HMS Sutherland repaid the loyalty of some of the families by taking them to sea for a Families Day.

The popular event was made even more enjoyable by fine weather – never a given at the end of October – and included a magician in the hangar, demonstration air defence exercises against attacking jet fighters and a flying display from HMS York's Lynx.

The ship's own Merlin was available on deck throughout the day to allow families to appreciate first-hand how large and impressive the anti-submarine aircraft is.

York, returning from duty in the Mediterranean, and Sutherland engaged in a short, high-speed passage close to the Isle of Wight, Sutherland emerging as victors in the short sprint, much to the delight of the embarked families.

With the MCPV over, Raider returned home and Bulwark headed for the Tyne and a formal visit by her ship's company to Durham (*see p10*).

Sutherland sailed south for exercises in the Bay of Biscay, and as *Navy News* went to press she was due back in her home port of Devonport for a period of deep maintenance, a new CO – Cdr Allan Wilson takes over this month – and the prospect of a deployment next year.





Family service in Senior service

SAMANTHA Dunn wrote about her naval family (*Letters*, November).

I would like to nominate my family as a contender for accumulated years of service.

My father, David Christie, joined as Stores Accountant in 1947 and retired as Lt Cdr in 1983, after service in Unicorn (Korea), Burghhead Bay, Battleaxe, Manxman, Reclaim, Renown and Revenge.

I joined in 1976 as Assistant Stores Accountant and retired as Lt Cdr in 2011, having served in HMSs Falmouth, Glasgow (Falklands), Invincible (twice), Southampton and Iron Duke.

My daughter, Lt Laura Christie, joined in 2010, serving as Deputy Logistics Officer in HMS Sutherland.

All this adds up to continuous service of 64 years.

And I would like to add the following family members, my wife, Gina, mum Irene, sister Alison, auntie Lyn – all Wrens.

My brother-in-law, Martin Raine, PO Caterer, my uncle, Jim Christie, Lt Cdr Combined service – decades.

That should get a few more responses!

– Andy Christie, Assistant General Secretary RNA, Portsmouth

...OUR father, Chief Yeoman Signals William John Roskilly, was awarded the DSM River Afton PQ17, Commodore's

Chief Yeoman, and served 32 years.

My eldest brother, CPO Cook Colin Roskilly, served from 1946 to 1968, 22 years.

My brother CPO Electrician (Submarines) Julian Roskilly served from 1950 to 1972, 22 years.

I, CPO Electrician (Submarines) served from 1958 to 1982, 24 years.

By my reckoning this means between our father, my brothers and myself, we accumulated 100 years' service.

No doubt this can be beaten but I feel it is a record of service to the country to be proud of.

– Jeffery Roskilly, Stalham, Norfolk

... MY TWIN brother and I joined the Royal Navy at HMS St Vincent on June 10 1958.

Our date of birth was February 27 1943. So we were 15 years and 103 days old at the time of joining.

It became obvious to me that we were the youngest in our class at the time.

Maybe even the youngest in the Navy at that moment (you could not join until you were 15 years of age).

Excluding those who lied about their age on enrolment, how many ex-Naval Boys (post World War 2) can claim to have joined at such an early age?

Lt Cdr F W 'Bill' Hagger, Tourouzelle, France

Christmas dreams of snowy hills

IT WAS Christmas Day 1944. I was serving aboard the Navy minesweeper HMS Full Moon as Leading Wireman MS (Minesweeping).

We were at anchor at Trincomalee Harbour in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and it was hot – very hot!

I was sitting in our after messdeck reading a magazine, *Victory*, to which I subscribed.

Stripped, except for a pair of shorts, the sweat was running down my face soaking the rag around my neck.

Turning to pages 54-55 nostalgia overcame me as I saw a picture of Worcester Cathedral and read this description of a Christmas trip made by a man as he cycled from Ledbury in Herefordshire over the snowcapped Malvern Hills through Malvern, my home town:

'Snow makes everything so peaceful.

'You get the impression that the countryside has at last extorted an enormous white quilt from the dhobi, crawled under it, turned over and gone to sleep with a gentle sigh.

'Yes, England was before me, with not a whisper of wind or a bird to break the quiet. So down into Malvern...'

This journey was very descriptive and my sweat rag was not only used to wipe the sweat from my face. I had been out here nearly two years by then.

Nobby, the Chief Engineer, came into the messdeck and asked me what was up – I could not answer for a minute or so, I had pictured that man's journey all the way.

– George Burton, Malvern Link, Worcestershire

Feeding the fleet

ON SUNDAY October 30, Pamela Cockhill died at her home in Portsmouth.

She was a familiar sight to thousands of sailors throughout the Fleet. Men and women of all ranks visited Cockhills, the family-run fish and chip shop outside HMS Nelson, in Queen Street.

Pam was the little lady who gracefully served countless customers young and old.

She was proud of her fish and

chips, and so pleased when a national magazine voted Cockhills the third best chip shop in the UK.

She had a heart of gold and such respect for the Royal Navy.

She will be missed by many, but never forgotten, for her fish and chips were indeed the best.

She served more than five thousand – she fed the Fleet.

The Rev Michael Brotherton, Pembroke, Wales

Time marches on – and so does the Navy

WHEN I saw my unexpected appearance in *Navy News* (Navy pacesetters, page 40, October) I knew I would have to brace myself for criticism of Cap and Black Pace Stick.

It was therefore with some trepidation and expected amusement that I turned straight to the letters page when November's edition turned up in the office.

I would like to inform Lt E C Coleman (whoever he is... we looked him up on the Global Address List but to no avail – I must presume he is retired and therefore a Mr E C Coleman) that it gave myself and my team enormous satisfaction and great pride to show the flag for the Senior Service on the British Army's premier parade ground.

The board of judges' faces were absolute pictures when the Dark Blue piped *Up Spirits* at the far end of their Parade Ground and then immediately fell out to receive their tot from a commissioned Naval Officer.

We had a fantastic time and the Army were great hosts. With regard to the peak on my cap, it was done for the Parade Ground only.

It was the first and only time I've done it.

It was done in the office over a cup of tea and with a sailmaker's palm and needle.

In my humble opinion, it carries on the very old tradition of sailors that in some way modify or personalise their kit for reasons of comfort, vanity, ease of use or pride.

It was in no way condoned, approved or even liked (as far as I was aware) by my superiors when I was the Ceremonial Training Officer at BRNC but it won infamy and notoriety and so we may conclude that in such a draft the cap did its job well.

This was only the second time an RN team had made an appearance (I also took the first team from BRNC in 2010) at this prestigious competition that has



● The Raleigh parade instructors compete at the British Army pace stick competition at RMA Sandhurst

been running since the 1950s.

This is probably mainly due to the fact that GIs only carried a swagger stick but also due to the fact that many of my colleagues in some way believe that the Navy are not capable of stepping up to the mark.

Well, I did step up to that mark (type 'Royal Navy Pacestick' into *YouTube* for the proof) and this year the Raleigh team were bestowed with the award of 'Best Newcomers'.

I almost feel I have to apologise to Mr Coleman for the Navy not being exactly as he would wish it.

The single most important factor in the Navy is the people and therein lies the problem for Mr Coleman – the Navy's changed and will continue to do so.

No doubt I will meet you in Hades sir where you'll recognise

me – I'll be the one in the Slashed Peak Cap!

– WO1 (AWW) Scott Stephenson, FOST Eastern Areas Manager, Plymouth

...CONTRARY to Lt Coleman's opinion, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines have a proud history of excellence on parade and state occasions.

The RN leads, the Army and RAF follow. The pace stick has been standard issue and used for many years by drill instructors and was certainly used at Raleigh 30-40 years ago.

It was interesting to hear Lt Coleman's views but it would be interesting to hear what ex-Chief GIs from Whale Island think about today's standards of drill.

They certainly would not have

been as polite as "you horrible little man", or "I've seen smarter maggots", the language would have been somewhat stronger, but always followed by "sir" when addressing or dressing down an officer.

As for our modern 'want to be GIs' pictured in the October issue – are tattoos now allowed at Raleigh and does pusser now offer a choice of pacing sticks in different colours?

I do not recollect a choice other than brown.

To sum up, I do not agree with the comments made by Lt Coleman, however I do agree with what was said about that cutaway cap.

Dreadful *sir*, very over-the-top and a step too far.

– Brian J Bloom, ex CPO Shenley, Hertfordshire

Smiter smitten

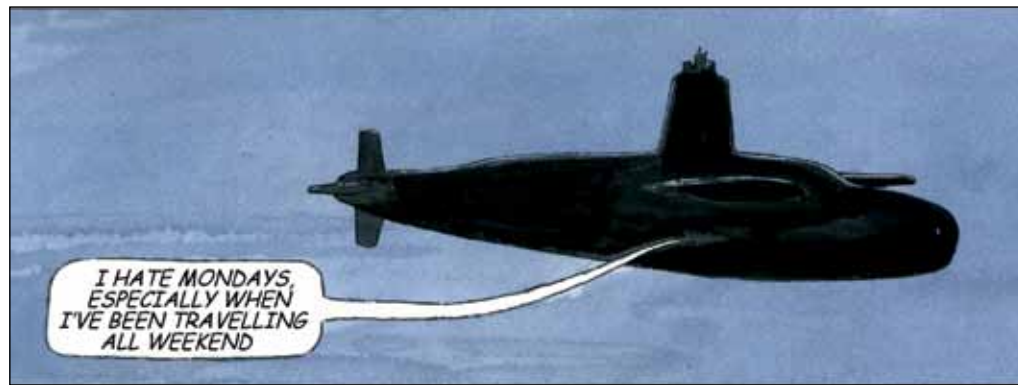
I PARTICULARLY enjoyed the article *Small Ship Big Impact* (October) in which you mention two ships from the University Royal Naval Units, Puncher and Express.

It would be nice in one issue to see HMS Smiter mentioned, as I don't remember seeing a mention of her.

I served aboard the wartime Smiter from her commission in January 1944, after paying off one Armed Merchant Cruiser.

I'm sure her captain and crew would be pleased of a mention and it would make a nice birthday present for me – I was 89 on the day I read the feature.

– Albert Valler, Fife



That Monday morning feeling

I THOUGHT that you might enjoy Tugg's cartoon (November, Comment) with a different caption which I have put in.

I am a retired submariner. The reason the

caption is so funny is that it was actually said by a crewmate when we were already three weeks into a long patrol.

– John Godkin, Plymouth

opinion

IT'S A great month for destroyers old and new. HMS Liverpool, oldest of the three remaining Type 42s, returned to Portsmouth in triumph after seven months off Libya.

She became the first warship to be fired at in anger since the Falklands campaign 30 years ago and did what destroyers are designed to do – unleashed the full force of her main gun, firing 211 rounds of high explosive and star shells to silence the pro-Gaddafi gun batteries and stop convoys in their tracks.

The Type 42s may be approaching the end of their four decades of service, but they're not bowing out quietly. As Liverpool came home, sister ships York and Edinburgh were as busy as ever. Meanwhile, the Type 45s are well on their way to take over the mantle of the hardworking and reliable 42s which have been the backbone of the Fleet since the 1980s.

2012 will be the 'Year of the 45.' Daring, the first of her class, is due to sail from Portsmouth in the new year after passing through her final training with flying colours.

Sisters Dauntless and Diamond are also ready to make their maiden deployments, which means that half the class of six Type 45s, the most advanced warships ever built, have now been declared operational.

As the CO of HMS Daring pointed out, recent events in the Mediterranean and Middle East prove how quickly a crisis can develop. Who knows what the next 40 years have in store for our Daring-class destroyers? Whatever the future holds, no doubt they will rise to the challenge as the Type 42s have done for so long.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD



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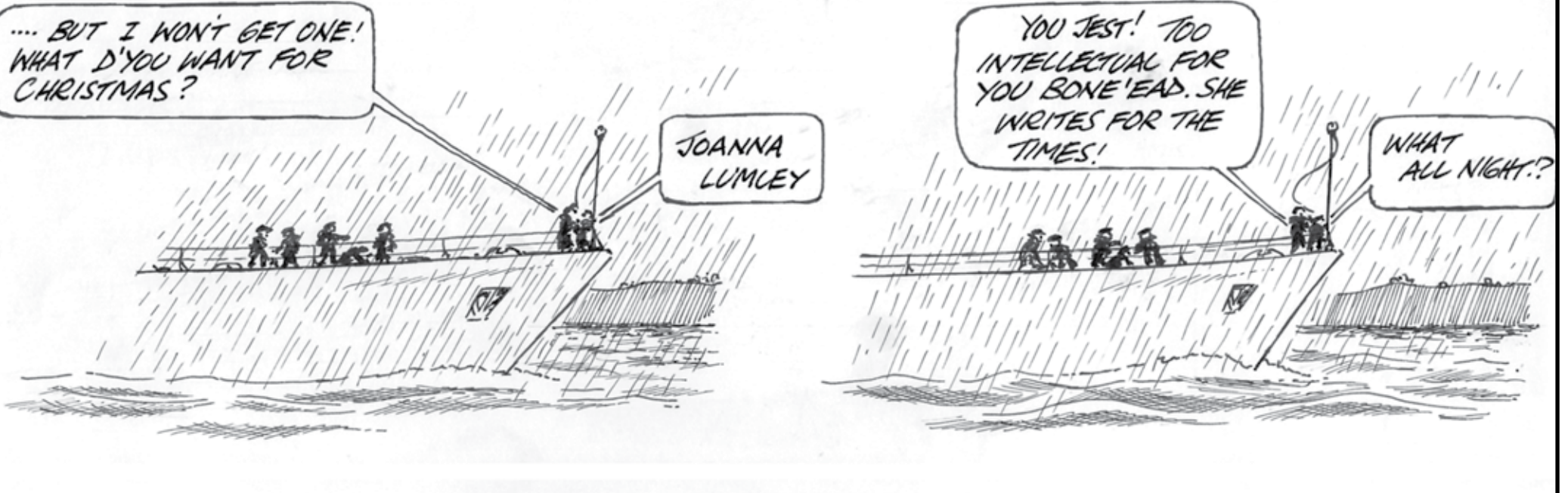
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CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGS



Manxman's mythical speed

A MOST interesting letter (November) from Vic Everest about HMS Manxman achieving 44 knots.

No doubt Manxman was fast, but 44 knots – never!

Yet again we have the speed of the Abdiel-class Fast Minelayers brought into the realms of myth and folklore.

Truly preposterous speeds have been accredited to this class of minelayer, some as high as 49 knots and 44 knots.

The best and most informative work on this class appeared in the November 1973 edition of *Profile Warship* no 38, written by Tom Burton, *Abdiel-Class Fast Minelayers*.

The trial speed of HMS Manxman is given as 35.59 knots (mean speed) on a displacement of 3450 tons, mean draught 13 feet 3.5 inches, shaft horse power at 72,970 SHP, revolutions 332.9.

Sister ship Welshman achieved 36.08 knots on a lesser displacement of 3300 tons.

HMS Ariadne and Apollo achieved 34.7 knots and 35.3 knots respectively on displacements of 3795 tons and 3715 tons.

Whilst it is accepted that these minelayers on a lighter displacement could certainly achieve higher speeds than those recorded on trials, 44 knots could never be achieved with the type of displacement hull, SHP of 72,000 that the Abdiel Minesweepers possessed,

even if the boilers were pressed.

I am sure I am not the only person to try to put the record straight as to the top speed of these wonderful Minelayers of World War 2.

Trial speeds depend on displacement, type of hull, state of fouling of hull, shaft horse power, temperature of the sea, atmospheric pressure, tidal stream, sea state and the depth of the sea, not forgetting the efficiency of the engineers and the helmsman who should steer a straight course as directed by the captain!

The navigator must also correctly record the start and finish of the measured mile or whatever distance the trial is to take place.

Several runs need to be taken and mean speeds recorded with, and against, the sea current.

– Charles Fisher, Honiton, Devon

...THE photo of the Fast Minelayer HMS Manxman (Letters, October) brought to mind the time, as an 18-year-old, I took passage onboard from Sydney to Hong Kong.

I think it would be during May 1946, and I wondered if any other readers were also onboard and could remember the heads we had to use?

They hung out over the stern of the starboard exit of the minelaying passage. Bowel evacuation was quite an experience!

I understood the passage to

Hong Kong would be a very quick one, but due to engine trouble it took about a couple of weeks.

On the ship's return to the UK I did hear that it had made the quickest voyage ever from Hong Kong.

– W G 'Mick' Ellis, Goole, East Yorkshire

...I WAS serving in HMS Undine in the 6th Frigate Squadron in 1956 and we were ordered to chase the Egyptian destroyer tied up on the trot ahead of us in Grand Harbour with orders to detain or sink her; we lost her around the Greek islands, then joined the Fleet as A/S escort to Suez.

On leaving Grand Harbour and well out to sea, the Admiral ordered the fleet to form line abreast.

At this time I was on bridge lookout, and the sight of that Mediterranean Fleet stretched in either direction, all with a good bone in their teeth, is still vivid in my memory.

The next order was "Full Speed to Gibraltar" – the last one in stands the cocktail party, within an hour or so Manxman was closing on the horizon and of course was the first to reach Gibraltar, a destroyer was second, and Undine came in third, which meant we had an extra day's shore leave than the stragglers who came in a day or so later.

Christopher Roddis, ex L/S, Antequera, Spain

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself,

please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.

Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



Send in the Marines

THE STATEMENT by the Prime Minister that the Somali pirates should be met with force is long overdue.

His remarks that a force of security men be recruited by the shipping lines is of course unnecessary.

We already have the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines stationed at Faslane on the Clyde – a highly trained body of the finest troops in the world.

When and 'if' our fighting forces are brought home, instead of deciding that we no longer require an armed force at our disposal and reducing our country's defences even more, would not the sensible thing to do be to strengthen the present Fleet Protection Group instead of making redundancies in the Royal Marines?

We could rename part of it as the Maritime Protection Group Royal Marines and pass the cost of maintaining it on to the shipping companies.

There need be no recruiting. Their base is already established.

They would be paid outside the Armed Forces' budget and the pirates would soon realise that they were up against a force much more efficient than theirs.

The shipping companies themselves would welcome the idea.

And I know the capabilities of the Royal Marines.

– Bernard Hallas, Publicity and Recruiting Officer, RN and RM Association, York, aged 93



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tittle to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Bernard Hallas.



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SEA Cadets took over the heart of London to stage their annual showpiece ceremonial event.

Youngsters aged between 12 and 18 demonstrated their skills as musicians, clubswingers and masters of drill as they marked the 206th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar by parading in the square which took its name from Nelson's victory.

More than 50 units were represented – including a handful of Royal Marines Cadet detachments – at a ceremony which required detailed planning, intensive practice and precise timing, to say nothing of the

last-minute preparations which ensured the cadets – including Army and RAF youngsters – looked smart and neatly slipped into their allotted roles.

Some 500 cadets were involved, with the highest profile going to the band, the Honour Guards and the various athletes in the PT displays.

Army and air cadets also took part in the ceremony, and platoons of each cadet force were inspected by the Commandant General Royal Marines, Maj Gen Buster Howes RM, and Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor.

Sea Cadets led platoons with a traditional bluejacket parade

from the Mall to Trafalgar Square, joined by a 80-strong marching band and Army and Air Cadets.

The cadets, from units across the UK, had just two days to practise and coordinate their moves for the very exacting and precise ceremonial display.

And that display was carried out in a limited space, in front of around 2,000 spectators, whether they were tourists to the city or Royal Navy senior officers – so no pressure there, then.

Capt Windsor said: "As Captain Sea Cadets, I was once again completely overwhelmed by the standard of drill, ceremonial, dress and bearing of our cadets

on parade today bathed in warm autumn sunshine under the shadow of Nelson's Column.

"Above all the cadets really enjoyed the day, and for all this will long remain a once-in-a-lifetime memory to be proud of."

The units which took part were: Nottingham, Newark, Harrogate, Finchley, Willesden and St Marylebone, Bromley, Edmonton, Tooting and Balham, Walton-on-the-Naze, Basildon, Leith, Edinburgh (Trinity), Musselburgh, Dundee, Methil, Dalbeattie, Hoylake, Runcorn, Sefton, City Of Liverpool, Kirkby and Liverpool North, Liverpool (West Derby), Middleton and Chadderton, Rhyl, Fleetwood, Aylesbury (RMCD), Herne Bay, Sheppey, Chatham Marines, Windsor and Eton, Chichester Harbour and Selsey, Reigate, Eastbourne, Eastbourne (RMCD), Hastings, Poole, Warsash, Chippenham, Bristol (Filton) (RMCD), Penzance, Plymouth (Drake), Birmingham (Sherbourne), Walsall (RMCD), Weymouth, Yeovil, Taunton, Barry, Torfaen, Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth and Lichfield, Fishguard, and

● Snapshots of the Sea Cadet Corps' Trafalgar Day parade in central London, including intensive preparations, displays of club-swinging, and a demonstration of precision drill by Sea Cadets, Royal Marine Cadets, the marching band and other youth organisations

Pictures: Leon McGowran



occasion

Milford Haven.

The Sea Cadets' parade was the largest celebration of the Royal Navy's victory over a Franco-Spanish fleet off the south-west corner of Spain, but other ceremonies were held at sites of significance.

The hoisting of the Colours and Nelson's signal 'England Expects...' marked the start of the traditional commemorations on board Nelson's flagship HMS Victory, with a team of ratings and staff from the man o'war hoisting the flags in sequence on Victory's (shortened) masts at 0800.

The central act of the ceremony is the laying of a wreath on the spot where Nelson fell.

That wreath was laid by Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command,

Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, for whom Victory is now the flagship.

Further wreaths were laid on the orlop deck where Nelson died; these were placed by Maj Gen Howes and Victory's CO, Lt Cdr Oscar Whild.

Meanwhile, a few miles to the north, the Nelson Society held a commemorative service at the Nelson Monument on Portsdown Hill to acknowledge the 204th anniversary of the laying of its foundations.

The Executive Officer of HMS Collingwood, Cdr Mike Dreehan, read Nelson's Prayer, while the establishment's chaplain, Janice Honey, led the service.

The monument was placed atop the hill by Nelson's 'companions in arms' following the battle.





'Old-school' schoolie is to retire

EDUCATION is a broad field, and one former "old-fashioned" Navy schoolie ranged far and wide in that field over the past 30 years and more.

Lt Cdr Nick Bradshaw retires this month after 14 years as one of the two Burnham Lecturers at Devonport.

During this time he has taught at GCSE and A-level standard, maths, physics, economics and history, and has advised candidates for the Admiralty Interview Board.

"I have taught many hundreds of students over the years, assisted scores to be promoted – many of them now quite senior officers," said Nick.

"Before starting this job I was a serving Naval instructor officer for 16 years, and taught many more people, including being an instructor officer at HMS Raleigh and a navigation instructor and Divisional Officer at BRNC Dartmouth.

"I ran classes and examinations in HMS Invincible during and after the Falklands Conflict, was Education Officer of HMS Ark Royal, Squadron Instructor to the 4th Frigate Squadron (the '21 Club') including a Falklands patrol in HMS Ambuscade, and was Senior Lecturer in Defence Studies at Manadon.

"I am, in other words, an old-fashioned 'schoolie', finishing after serving in or for the Navy since 1979, now hauling down my small but widespread flag."

Glowing report

A ROYAL Navy childcare centre in Plymouth is celebrating a glowing report from education watchdog Ofsted.

The RN Pre-School at Radford Centre, Plymstock, won six grade 1 'outstanding' judgements and 11 grade 2 'good' verdicts, with overall quality of provision judged to be 'good'.

The centre was praised by Capt Mark Knibbs, of Devonport Naval Base, responsible for RN pre-school provision in the city, who said the staff, centre and organisation behind it were to be congratulated on the "excellent" report.



● The Commanding Officer of HMS *Illustrious*, Capt Jerry Kyd (left), unveils a painting of the helicopter carrier by artist (and Portsmouth Naval Base hairdresser) Julia Pankhurst (right). The painting shows *Lusty* leaving Rosyth, and marks the completion of her refit period and departure from Portsmouth for Operational Sea Training. Also pictured are AB(WS) Jordan Webster and AB(CIS) Michelle Mattinson. Prints available via pankhurst.paintings@hotmail.co.uk

Village hall is spruced up

TWO dozen Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College have given Harbertonford village hall something of a makeover.

The 24 members of Astute Division started Initial Officer Training at Dartmouth in September, and took part in the outreach project to help develop teamwork and make them aware of the Navy's commitment to community relations work.

They got through a considerable amount of painting, had a request played on the local radio, and one – OC Charlotte Bainbridge – even enjoyed a cake provided by villagers to mark her birthday.

Village Hall Committee secretary Jackie Clayton said: "We really enjoyed their company – they achieved a huge amount which means so much for all the users of the hall, and seemed to have fun, too."



Naval horsepower

NAVAL engineers have spent two tough weeks grooming a horse – and the evidence will be seen for miles around.

The air engineers from 702 Naval Air Squadron, based at RN air station Yeovilton, spent days dragging tonnes of chalk into position on the Osmington White Horse, north east of Weymouth in Dorset.

The horse and rider was created in 1808 as a tribute to King George III, who regularly visited his seaside residence in Weymouth.

The current restoration project began in May 2009 to rectify two centuries of deterioration, spasmodic attempts at maintenance (some of dubious value) and changes caused by weather.

Eight engineers, led by Lt Michael 'Soapy' Watson, worked on the

surprisingly steep slopes to restore two of the horse's legs.

"The work was incredibly difficult, working on a steep slope moving very heavy materials," said Soapy.

"We needed to work together as a team to achieve our task, but despite this there were a number of mishaps and a few minor avalanches caused along the way..."

Colleague James Godden added: "At the end of each day all of us were aching and covered in dirt, but most of all we were proud of the work we had done.

"Judging by the fact the horse is once again visible in all its splendour from Weymouth Bay, we were well and truly happy with the result."

The Navy team's work will feature as part of a BBC2 documentary about restoring the nation's landmarks, due to be broadcast early next year.



In the steps of Shackleton

A ROYAL Navy senior rate will take part in an attempt to recreate the epic Antarctic journey of Sir Ernest Shackleton.

PO Seb Coulthard, of RNAS Yeovilton, will be one of a team of adventurers led by explorer and environmental scientist Tim Jarvis, that will make the gruelling 800-mile voyage across the Southern Ocean from Elephant Island to South Georgia.

Three men will then traverse the interior of South Georgia to reach the abandoned whaling station of Stromness, where Shackleton

raised the alarm during the ill-fated Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-17.

The journey is often cited as one of the greatest rescue missions in the history of exploration, and to this day no one has been able to replicate both the boat journey and the mountain crossing.

In order to relive Shackleton's experience with the greatest possible authenticity, the six-man crew will use technology, victuals and equipment that would have been available at the time of the original mission in 1916.

Seb won a place on the expedition following an international appeal for volunteers.

At the request of expedition patron the Hon Alexandra Shackleton, Seb will be representing the Royal Navy as a tribute to Shackleton's leadership

and the brave spirit of the men who accompanied him.

The lifeboat Alexandra Shackleton has arrived at Portland Marina and will be seen by visitors to the marina over the next year while she undergoes further fittings and sea trials in preparation for the expedition, at the end of the austral summer 2012-13.

The marina at Portland maintains strong links with the Royal Navy and Fleet Air Arm, as Osprey Quay now occupies the site of the former helicopter base HMS Osprey.

A former Royal Navy Lynx aircraft now stands as the gate guardian for the marina, a deactivated Mk 8 torpedo sits on the quayside and the memorial to sailors who died in the HMS *Illustrious* liberty boat tragedy in 1948 stands on the waterfront.

All hands on decking

WHILE HMS Kent was undergoing her refit in Rosyth, a local school's request to help with a little refurbishment of its own was answered by a working party from the frigate.

Decking in the grounds of Kings Road primary school in Rosyth had suffered after several harsh winters, and needed to be repainted to make it more weatherproof.

A plea to MOD Caledonia for some help was picked up by the sailors from Kent, whose ship has been north of the border for a year and was due to complete her maintenance as *Navy News* went to press.

As if to illustrate the problem, the decking was lashed by heavy rain the day before the party arrived, though they only had to contend with a wind that was "more than a little fresh".

The frigate's Commanding Officer, Cdr Ben Ripley, said: "I'm very pleased that HMS Kent has been able to lend a helping hand to the staff and children at Kings Road primary school.

"It's wonderful to be able to give a little something back to the community that has supported us during this time, a community that we have very much enjoyed being a part of."

Head teacher Graeme Garnham said: "The quad is widely used each day by staff and children and needed some refurbishment.

"We are deeply indebted to the members of the crew of HMS Kent and to the parents who gave their time to complete the task and to leave us with a quad to be proud of."

Gate duty for class

A CLASS of students from HMS Collingwood left the world of weapon engineering behind for a day to tackle some unruly vegetation and a tired-looking front gate.

The members of a System Engineering and Management Course (SEMC) class will eventually qualify as deputy weapon engineer officers, but their focus for this particular day was the arched wall and heavy iron gates of Park Place Pastoral centre at Wickham, near Fareham.

The main gate of the Georgian listed building needed refurbishment and a coat of paint, having been covered by a thick growth of ivy, while the railings were suffering weather damage.

The surrounding brambles had also swamped the area and required extensive pruning.

Sister Juliette, one of the nuns of the convent of the Franciscan Order, who live at and run the centre, said: "It is great to foster a relationship with the officers of HMS Collingwood, and we are incredibly pleased with the new look of our gates.

"We wish the students of SEMC all the very best of luck with their future careers and extend our thanks to the Commodore of HMS Collingwood for allowing them to be spared during their course."

First ex-RN Beefeaters at the Tower

TWO youngsters listen as Yeoman Warder Rob Fuller tells 'the story' – only the second sailor to do so in the history of the Tower of London.

The former comms specialist is one of two former RN sailors who this year made history as the first Beefeaters.

After five months of training – including learning 'the story of the tower' (akin to London cabbies learning 'the knowledge') – Rob had to take the Constable of the Tower on a tour to prove he knew all anyone would need to know about the castle.

Among the new man's colleagues is ex-MAA Rob Grenfell, who took the loyal oath in February, becoming the first ex-sailor-turned-Beefeater in

the 502-year history of the Yeoman Warders.

There have been Royal Marines on Beefeater duties since the 1970s – presently ex-Royals Steve Froggatt and Barney Chandler assist visitors as they look around the Tower.

In years gone by the Beefeaters served as guards for the gates and prisoners in the Tower, but today the role is a mix of ceremonial and tour guide.

All must have completed at least 22 years of service and risen to warrant officer, but until 2009 sailors were exempt – unlike soldiers, airmen and marines, they swear no oath of allegiance to the monarch. The Governor of the Tower petitioned the Queen to change

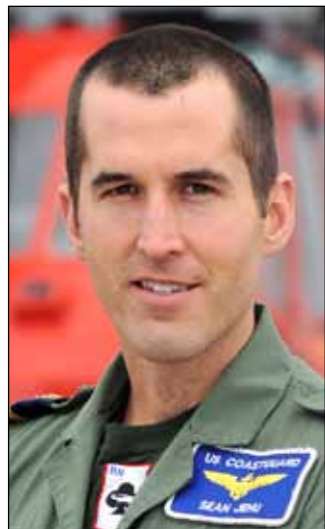
the rules, and she assented.

Yeoman Warder Fuller, whose 34-year career in the RN saw him serve in assault ships *Fearless* and *Intrepid* and aircraft carrier HMS *Ark Royal*, now lives in the Tower grounds.

Tower bosses would like a larger RN presence – four out of 37 Beefeaters is, says Deputy Governor John Brown, "not representative of the Navy's size or importance in the Armed Forces and we would like to see more of them".

Luckily, the Tower is recruiting right now. So if any retired/retiring warrant officers with at least one long service and good conduct medal are interested in working at the Tower they should contact rob.sherrington@hrp.org.uk





Exchange pilots join 771 NAS

TWO new international exchange pilots have joined the Royal Navy's Cornish search and rescue squadron.

The two officers and their families moved to RN Air Station Culdrose under a long-standing foreign exchange programme involving the Royal Navy, the US Coast Guard and the German Navy.

Lt Sean Jehu (*above*) hails from the Amish country in rural Pennsylvania, and served nine years in the US Army as a pilot in medical evacuation units in the southern US, South Korea and Hawaii.

In 2005 he transferred to the US Coast Guard, flying search and rescue, law enforcement missions throughout the northern United States, over the Great Lakes and into the Caribbean.

Kapitänleutnant Steffen Volkwein was born in Berlin, and planned for a career in military aviation from an early age.

Steffen spent six years with Naval Air Wing 5 in Kiel, flying Sea Kings on search and rescue missions covering the North and Baltic Seas.

He also deployed to assist the UN Interim Forces in the Lebanon mission in 2007.

The aim of the exchange programme is to promote awareness and understanding of each nation's SAR flying practices, routines and techniques in order to enhance and further develop their flying ability and experience.



Culdrose contingent parades at Madron

AN ANNUAL service which began when news from the Battle of Trafalgar was brought ashore in 1805 has been held in Cornwall.

And once again personnel from RN Air Station Culdrose played a prominent role in the Nelson Thanksgiving Service and Parade at Madron, near Penzance.

The first news of the Royal Navy's victory at Trafalgar was passed to fishermen working in Mounts Bay by HMS Pickle as she made her way to Falmouth with dispatches from the battle.

The fishermen carried the message back to port and, on November 4 1805, the news of Nelson's death and victory was announced from the Assembly Rooms in Penzance.

The assembled crowd then processed to the Mother Church of Penzance, the Church of St Maddern at Madron, where a memorial service was held and the Nelson Banner, which was hastily prepared to mourn the death of Nelson, was paraded for the first time.

The Banner is now kept in Madron Parish Church and brought out each year on the Sunday closest to Trafalgar Day when it is held to the "Immortal Memory".

For many years similar services were held, but it was in 1946 that the tradition of holding an annual commemoration was revived by the Rev (later Canon) Michael Hocking, a former naval captain, and vicar of Madron at the time.

Each year Culdrose plays a major part in upholding this tradition, and on completion of the



● Capt Toby Williamson, Commanding Officer of RN Air Station Culdrose, takes the salute at the annual Nelson Thanksgiving service and parade at Madron in Cornwall

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Sterrett

service, HMS Seahawk Volunteer Band leads a march-past at which the Commanding Officer of the air base takes the salute.

The parade included a colour party and guard from Culdrose, members of the Sea Cadet Corps,

the Royal British Legion and various other veterans' organisations.

Culdrose CO Capt Toby Williamson played his part, and joined other senior naval officers from the base at the thanksgiving service at Madron.

Examining the Diamond

THE Navy's personnel chief dropped by at HMS Raleigh to see how new training initiatives are bedding in.

Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery watched recruits using their new skills during Exercise Bright Diamond, the final confirmatory test of the enhanced ten-week initial naval training course.

The three-day, two night humanitarian-style exercise, introduced in May, takes place at Scraesdon Fort near Antony and on board the former minesweeper HMS Brecon, moored on the River Lynher.

Vice Admiral Montgomery visited the fort and spoke to staff and recruits (*pictured right*) before moving on to the site of a new replenishment at sea (RAS) training facility, currently under construction.

Work on the £25m trainer began in the summer and is due to finish in 2014.



Managed by Rolls-Royce Power Engineering, the project will deliver a land-based demonstrator known as the Heavy RAS (HRAS), which will test new equipment for the next generation of warships, including the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.

It will also allow the amount of stores that can be transferred to increase from two tonnes to five.

The senior officer's visit concluded with a passing-out parade, when he inspected the latest group of recruits to complete initial training.

Award for Alex

A ROYAL Fleet Auxiliary officer cadet has won an award for his high standards during training.

Engineering Cadet Alex Cooper was presented with the Richard Jones Award for Outstanding Cadetship by Richard's widow Jane Jones.

The award is presented annually in memory of the late Chief Officer Richard Jones, who was Cadet Training Officer from 1983-85.

Presenting the trophy, Mrs Jones said: "Alex is, without question, a very worthy recipient of the Richard Jones Award."

3/O Cooper won the accolade by "repeatedly showing the drive and determination to succeed through hard work and natural ability both as an engineering officer and as a leader and team player in the Engineering department."

Alex, 21, has been with the RFA for three years, and during that time has travelled extensively.

Engineering features in his spare time, too – he has just rebuilt a classic Mini Cooper.



Services in the pink (list)

ROYAL Navy diversity expert Lt Cdr Mandy McBain has been listed as one of the most influential gay and lesbian people in the UK.

Lt Cdr McBain (*above*) is the Chair of the Naval Service Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Forum and a NATO LGBT Working Group Member.

With responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion policy in the Naval Service, the officer was one of more than 1,500 nominations for the 2011 *Independent on Sunday* Pink List.

Around 500 names appeared in the nomination process, and all were reviewed by a panel of judges.

When the judging was over, Lt Cdr McBain found herself at number 59 on a list of 101 luminaries.

The biographical details issued with the publication of the List declare: "The most senior openly gay officer in the Royal Navy, with 20 years' service, Lt Cdr McBain was last year involved in averting a bomb hoax on HMS Excellent."

"She helped to create the Navy's first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum, which she chairs."

Also on the list are L/Cpl James Wharton (17th), described as: "The military man who became a pioneer for gay soldiers after appearing on the cover of *Soldier* magazine in 2009 alongside the slogan 'Pride', and Wg Cdr Mark Abrahams, who helped establish and chairs the RAF LGBT Forum (83rd).



Top deep is rewarded

WARFARE specialist Matthew Barker clutches a new award (*above*) donated to the Royal Navy by the Submariners Association.

Matthew joined the Mob last year and completed his training at the RN Submarine School in HMS Raleigh in July.

And his commitment and dedication to training meant Matthew became the first recipient of the trophy, presented to him at Raleigh by Dave Barlow, the National Chairman of the Submariners Association.

The new trophy is a replica of the 'Submariner', which forms part of the memorial in Westminster Abbey to the men of the Commandos, RN Submarine Service, Airborne and Special Air Service who died in World War 2.

It will remain in the Submarine School, while each recipient of the award, to be awarded on a biannual basis, will receive a miniature of the statuette and a certificate.

Faslane workers check out the HIE-Life

HUNDREDS of workers flocked to Clyde Naval Base's 'HIE-Life' annual health and safety event.

Staged in the Neptune Building Supermarket for the first time, HIE-Life attracted dozens of stalls and displays from leading companies in the health, safety and environmental sector, as well as Base departments.

The exhibition, which was months in the making, was organised by Sue Hill from Babcock's Health and Safety department and Anne MacDonald from the base's Injury Free (IIF) campaign.

Specialist event company Pro-x was involved, and Faslane Flotilla's Duncan Gow arranged the valuable manpower to help set up the stalls.

"We started arrangements for the exhibition back in July this year," said Anne.

"It looks like our preparations have paid off as we have had around 500 visitors over the past two days."

Sue continued: "The event seems to grow each year, and it is fantastic that we can get so many people involved and interested in attending."

"Health, safety and the environment are vitally important subjects and among the Naval Base's top priorities."

"The exhibition gives us a chance to raise awareness, exchange knowledge and explore different solutions to problems."

"It also gives those base departments with an environmental and safety remit the chance to promote themselves."

Among those departments taking the opportunity for self-promotion was Clyde's Regional Occupational Health team.

"We have brought along an indoor air quality monitor, which shows how we can measure working environments to ensure they comply with regulations," said WO John Laird.

"On the environmental health side we've also been demonstrating some of the equipment we use in the role of pest control, and with regards to occupational health we've seen interest in some of the our first aid courses and health promotions which we regularly run."

One stall which was drawing a lot of attention was manned by the Grounds and Wastes team.

"We have some tough targets to achieve on recycling at the base," said Jane Trayte.

"At the moment we are recycling 52 per cent of waste,

but by 2015 we need to ensure we recycle 80 per cent.

"It's great to have an event such as this to get our message across and it has been heartening to see how much interest there is in what we are doing to achieve our targets."

Also attending during the two days were the Defence Fire and Rescue Service, Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines, Northern Diving Group and the HMNB Clyde Sportsdrome and Medical Centre, and companies such as TISO, UVEX, Ansell Healthcare, Globus, Factair, Scaffold and Aztec spill kits.

Tales of a true Naval hero

AN exhibition on 'Admiral Cochrane, the Real Master and Commander' has opened at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Using many objects never seen on public display before, including medals and personal mementos, the exhibition traces Cochrane's life from boyhood in Fife to Napoleonic stalwart, on through scandal and disgrace to his status as Chilean national hero.

The exhibition runs until February 19 2012.

Bandies in Bahrain

AGAINST the impressive floodlit backdrop of the 780ft twin towers of Bahrain World Trade Centre, five Royal Marines Bandmen take a breather from entertaining Britons in the grounds of the UK Embassy.

Musicians from the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines took time out of their busy UK schedule to visit the local community and Royal Navy contingents in Bahrain.

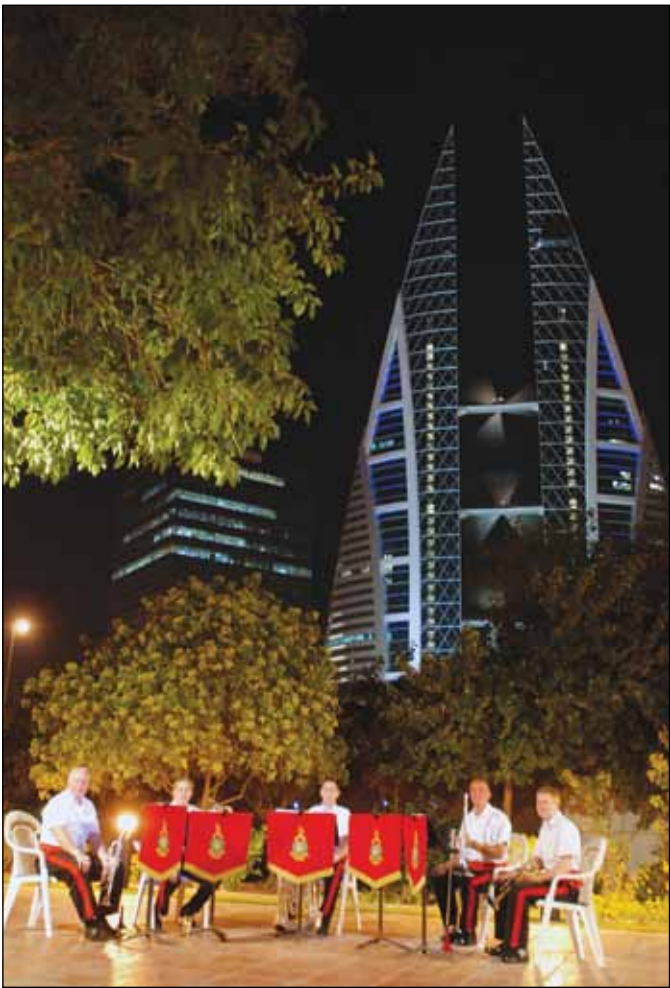
The Middle Eastern kingdom is a crucial hub for Royal Navy operations in the region – it's home to the UK Maritime Component Command headquarters and four minehunters, and is regularly used by Royal Navy frigates and destroyers deployed to the Gulf.

The brass quintet, led by Band C/Sgt Rich Fenwick, performed at numerous venues and engagements including the Dilmun Club for expatriates, Bahrain Rugby Club, the Gulf Hotel, the British Embassy, the Bahrain School and the sprawling NSA Bahrain – Naval Support Activity Bahrain, the huge US naval headquarters home to some 6,000 Service and civilian personnel.

"We had a great time in Bahrain and received a great deal of admiration wherever we went. The school children thought we were fantastic and we got to play in some breathtaking locations such as the British Embassy with a backdrop of the Bahrain World Trade Centre towers," said Musn Adam Gore, the junior member of the five-piece.

"I'm very new to the job but music is my life and we are all very passionate about it. To be able to give something like this back to the people of Bahrain so early in my career is something that will stay with me for a very long time; they were all so friendly."

Lt Gary Turner RN, on the staff of the UKMCC, added: "As an ex-member of the RM Band Service myself, I know how lucky we were to have such professional




and fantastic musicians as the Royal Marines Band come out to Bahrain during their very busy schedule.

"We wanted to take the opportunity to show our appreciation to the local and expat communities of Bahrain, and what better way than the power of music.


Lt Turner continued: "The opportunity to build relations with

the local community in Bahrain is never underestimated.

"The British Ambassador to Bahrain is very keen to support our long-standing relationships between Bahraini and UK personnel, and UK forces based here. The Bahraini and local expatriate communities have always been very welcoming to our UK Service personnel based here."



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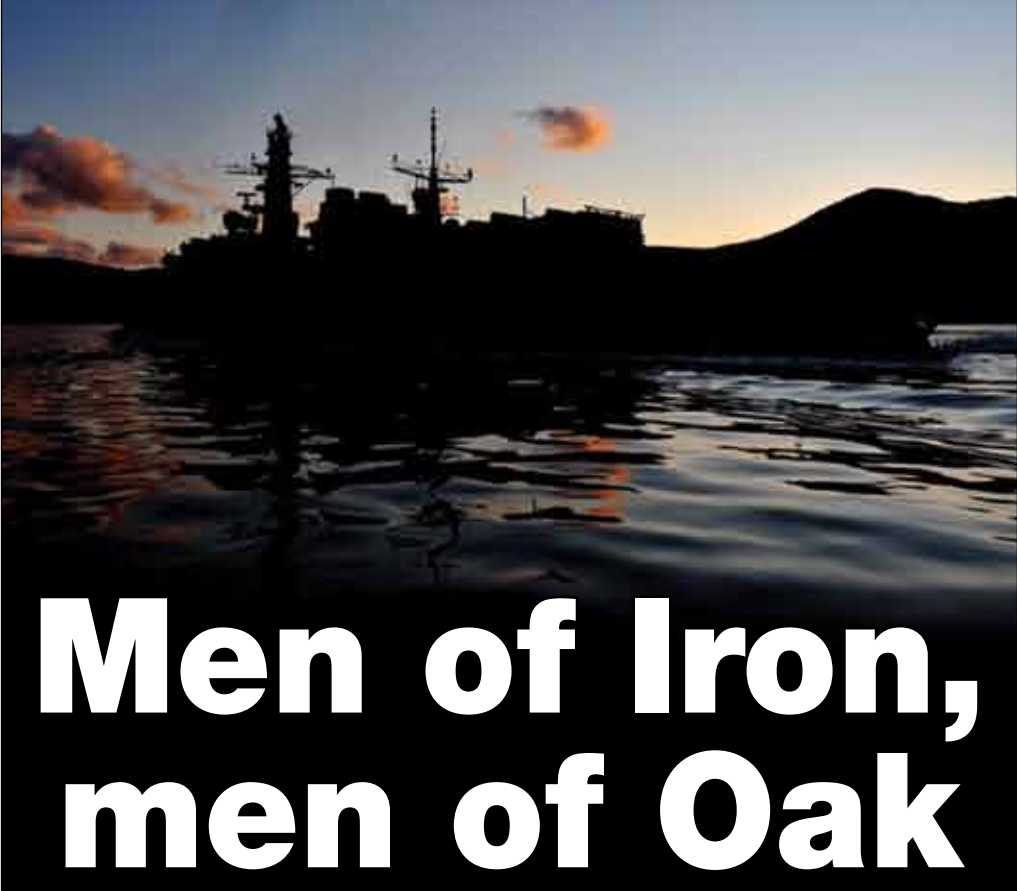
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SEEMINGLY merging with the bleak Scottish landscape as dusk sets in over the Isle of Skye, HMS Iron Duke turns 'black duke' as she continues putting the Fleet's top navigators through their paces.

After passing beneath the Skye Bridge, the warship continued her circumnavigation of the UK through the Sound of Sleat – pictured here by award-winning RN photographer LA(Phot) Keith Morgan.

Fresh from a high-profile visit to her affiliated city of Hull (more on that in a mo'), the Type 23 frigate sailed around the top of the country for a Spec N – specialist navigator – course which will see her tour the UK and visit the challenging waters of the Channel Islands (always a favourite for navigational training).

In the midst of that training, however, there was time for reflection and contemplation at the Royal Navy's most famous natural anchorage of the 20th Century: Scapa Flow.

The huge expanse of water in the Orkneys was the base for the Grand and Home Fleets in World Wars 1 and 2 respectively and although a place of sanctuary was also a site of tragedy in both conflicts.

Here in 1917 battleship HMS Vanguard blew up as a result of an internal explosion, killing all but two of the 806 souls aboard.

A generation later, there was even greater loss of life when German submarine U47 penetrated the Scapa defences and torpedoed the battleship HMS Royal Oak.

The leviathan sank in a matter of minutes, taking 833 men down with her, including more than 100 boy seamen.

To this day their tomb is a protected war grave, one of the most hallowed naval sites in the British Isles, regularly visited by Royal Navy divers who replace the White Ensign which 'flies' from the wreck.

HMS Iron Duke – a modern day successor of the flagship of the Grand Fleet which was based at Scapa 100 years ago – stopped over the upturned hull of the Royal Oak for a service of remembrance on her flight deck, and her Commanding Officer Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest cast a wreath into the choppy waters in memory of the men lost.

Before coursing through Scottish waters, his frigate enjoyed an exceptional few days on the Humber.

Aside from being applauded through the streets of the great port, the ship's company were cheered by nearly 22,000 fans at Hull City's KC Stadium as the Championship side hosted West Ham.

The sailors were guests of honour and lined the pitch as the teams walked out, before three of the ship's company marched into the centre circle to lay two wreaths and present the match ball ahead of a minute's silence – impeccably observed by the crowd.

Proceedings at the stadium (the Hammers won

2-0 for the record) were among the highlights of three days very much in the public eye.

There was barely a moment to relax for the 180 men and women aboard Iron Duke once she was safely alongside in King George Dock.

Already in the city, waiting for the Type 23 warship to arrive, were seven sailors who'd spent the previous three days helping to paint the local Sea Cadet's HQ... appropriately named TS Iron Duke.

As well as hosting dignitaries, schools and business leaders, the frigate staged a capability demonstration to show the good folk of Humberside what she and her ship's company can do. The sailors also carried out a search and rescue exercise with the local fire brigade.

The ship's packed weekend programme also included hosting school children, a 'pirate party' on board for local foster children, and a run out for the rugby XV against Hull 2nds who beat the sailors 49-19.

More than 4,700 members of the public took advantage of a 'ship open to visitors' day when the gangway was opened for six and a half hours.

Thousands more Hullensians paused to applaud the sailors as they marched through the city centre, exercising their right of Freedom of the City of Kingston upon Hull (pictured below).

Led by the Hull Police Band, the parade passed the Cenotaph, and continued through the main shopping streets, halting in Queen Victoria Square where Hull's Lord Mayor Cllr Colin Inglis took the salute.

Afterwards he and civic leaders hosted more than 100 sailors at a reception in the impressive surroundings of the city's Guildhall.

There were few prouder sailors taking part in events than LS Matthew 'Beef' Wellington who hails from the city (he's one of two locals aboard the frigate).

"Marching through Hull in my uniform was a privilege – something I never thought I would get to do," he said.

For his commanding officer, bringing Iron Duke back to Hull – it's her second visit in a little over a year – capped an eventful 2011 for the Type 23.

She carried out her first 'east of Suez' deployment this year, a six-month tour of duty which ended with her joining the international effort off Libya when her main gun fired in anger at targets ashore.

"We regard our affiliation with Hull as an important commitment to the people of the area and an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of life onboard our ship," said Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest.

"Our sailors had the opportunity to show the people of Hull their professionalism and purpose in this rapidly-changing world in which we live.

"It's also been a great chance for the ship's company to repay the affection shown to our predecessors and to continue to foster the mutually rewarding relationship for the future HMS Iron Duke ship's company and the city of Hull."



Christmas parcel plea by MOD

A CAMPAIGN last year to reduce the burden on the Forces' logistics system succeeded in cutting the volume of unsolicited mail by 90 per cent on the 2009 figure.

And once again the message is: if you want to support the Forces over Christmas, please back an existing Service charity rather than sending goodwill parcels.

By doing so, there is a very good chance that men and women serving in places like Afghanistan will have a good Christmas, surrounded by presents and mail from their families and friends.

"We are extremely grateful for the levels of support shown by people right across the country, which provides clear evidence of the respect and affection in which our Armed Forces are held," said Lt Gen Sir William Rollo, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel and Training).

"Such support means a great deal to our men and women, particularly those deployed on operations.

"The unceasing generosity and heartfelt support of people at home is vital in keeping up morale, often in very difficult circumstances.

"However, you should be aware that the MOD provides a comprehensive welfare package to all those serving abroad, including free phone calls home, free email and Internet access, in addition to free mail services for families and close friends.

"On top of this, we want the public to be able to show their support in ways which do not place undue strain on the postal and logistic system and increase personal danger to those delivering mail, particularly towards the front line, which involves helicopter flights or road convoys.

"It is estimated that the Armed Forces mail system will handle approximately 22,500 parcels per week over Christmas this year – the eight-week period between mid-October and mid-December – as opposed to 10,000 parcels over a 'normal' eight-week period.

"Our main priority remains to ensure that letters and parcels from families and friends get through in good time.

"If the system is swamped by the public's generosity in sending their own goodwill parcels to people they do not know, the all-important personal mail can be significantly delayed.

"Although parcels from the public are well-received, if it means that mail from family and friends does not get through, it can cause disappointment and heartache."

Alternative means of support suggested by the MOD include:

■ The Operational Welfare Fund, run by SSAFA Forces Help (<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/OperationalWelfareFund>)

■ Charity uk4u Thanks, which sends a special gift box full of presents to every Serviceman and woman on operations over Christmas (www.uk4u.org)

■ Details of other Service charities can be found at www.mod.uk/publicsupportforour-servicepersonnel

RN Police scour returning ship



● RPO McIndoe searching with RMP

MEMBERS of the RN Police from RNP HQ(E) at HMS Collingwood participated in a UK Border Agency (UKBA)-led operation searching of the cargo and vehicles landed from MV Anvil Point, which docked at the Sea Mounting Centre at Marchwood on its return from the Middle East.

During the operation more than 50 personnel from UKBA and the Forces' police services, including the MOD Police, carried out searches of the cargo and vehicles on board on the lookout for contraband.

This was the second such operation of its kind conducted this year and the team, including Drugs Detection dogs, police search teams and vehicle-mounted X-ray technology, searched

more than 120 vehicles, 50 ISO containers and personnel who had been on board as security for the vessel on her transit home.

The search resulted in some contraband material being seized, and whilst no formal action is being pursued by UKBA on this occasion, this may not be the case in the future.

The operation sends a very clear message to Service personnel that smuggling contraband within military transport and freight will not be tolerated; possession of contraband may result in criminal prosecution, as certainly would be the case with the importation of illicit drugs or other items of interest.

UKBA have indicated their intent to target future operations at ships returning.

Rustling up treats in Brocklesby's galley

SERVING three square meals a day to a fighting force on the front line of a high-profile conflict was all in a day's work for LCH Gavin 'Buster' Brown, head chef in HMS Brocklesby.

After keeping shipping lanes off Libya clear of mines, the Hunt-class minehunter returned to a rapturous welcome in the summer.

Brocklesby recently visited London to support the international WorldSkills competition and conference on training and vocational skills at ExCeL.

And Gavin was only too pleased to get the opportunity to meet and cook with award-winning chef and rising celebrity Will Torrent, who

has family links to the Navy.

Will is a WorldSkills alumnus, winning the coveted Medallion of Excellence in 2007 in Japan as a specialist patissier and chocolatier – a first for a UK pastry chef.

At just 25 he has worked with the likes of Heston Blumenthal, Delia Smith and Brian Turner, and is a consultant to Waitrose.

Will was delighted to bring his sweet treats' know-how to the chefs on board Brocklesby and enjoyed helping Gavin out in the rather confined working space of the ship's galley on board and hearing his stories of catering for a hungry crew with a battle to fight.

"It doesn't matter whether you're on a helicopter carrier, a

destroyer or a minehunter," said Gavin.

"One of the few things which unites everyone, from the CO right through to the most junior sailor, is the food. Good scran keeps morale up and everyone shipshape for the job.

"Meal-times are an important part of the day's structure and we take great pride in producing good quality food for the ship's company so that they in turn are able to continue to represent the Royal Navy and, indeed, the UK at the sharp end of operations."

Gavin continued: "The trickiest thing of all is operating in a confined space. And during our Libyan deployment there was also

quite a lot of heat to cope with.

"But, as the old saying goes, if you can't stand the heat... I was really proud to be a key member of the team on board, serving up 45 meals four times a day to a hot, battle-honed crew.

"So it's nice to be able to sit back just for once and let someone else whip up the treats. Will has been great – a thorough professional and very helpful."

After being put through his paces by Gavin with a bit of prep and cooking for an evening meal, Will took over the galley.

He was able to get Gavin and his colleagues to help him out as he produced a dark chocolate and rum tart with glazed oranges and vanilla cream for the crew of 45.

"I've become used to cooking in some truly exceptional kitchens," said Will. "I can't believe how well-equipped, but very cramped the galley is on one of these ships – it's a very hard-working environment and has certainly been an amazing experience for me.

"Both my grandfathers served in the Royal Navy, so today it has been an incredible honour to serve up a bit of a treat for these guys who have so recently returned from the front line."

WorldSkills London 2011 is the largest international skills competition; 1,000 young people from 55 countries and regions competed to become the best of the best in 46 skill areas across seven sectors, from health to engineering.



Gannet mast replaced

WHILE HMS Victory in Portsmouth has lost most of her masts while undergoing conservation, another veteran warship has just regained one of hers.

Victorian sloop HMS Gannet, open to the public at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham – where HMS Victory was built – now has a new 70ft lower foremast.

Built in two sections and made up of around 200 pieces of kiln-dried Douglas fir, the mast was rigged up and fitted out in the space between the sloop,

which dates from 1878, and submarine HMS Ocelot.

It was then lifted across to the ship using a 300-tonne crane, and dropped through the deck to slot into the keel (pictured above).

In keeping with Naval tradition a coin was placed under the base of the mast – on this occasion a £5 coin commemorating the Queen's coronation.

The mast was assembled in No 3 Covered Slip by shipwright Ben Jefferies, assisted by Dave Appleton, and dressed, rigged and stepped by Ian Bell.

Tributes are paid to Sir Julian at service

NEARLY 700 people filled Portsmouth's Catholic Cathedral to pay tribute to one of the Navy's most influential late-20th Century leaders.

Front-line operations and day-to-day life across the Fleet are still shaped by the actions of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Julian Oswald nearly two decades ago.

Sir Julian, who died in July at the age of 77, was head of the Senior Service for four years during a period of tremendous change – notably the end of the Cold War and female sailors going to sea, a policy he steered through to its inception.

The admiral served as First Sea Lord from 1989 to 1993 and was instrumental in making the case for helicopter carrier HMS Ocean; he is credited with laying the foundation for the Navy's

Ancient pudding

A CONTENDER for the title of oldest Christmas pudding in the world has been given to the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

The tinned pudding was found in the back of a family's food cupboard, and dates from 1900.

It was one of hundreds of Peek, Freen & Co's Teetotal Plum Pudding sent to members of the Naval Brigade during the Boer War by Aggie Weston.

Trafalgar Night in India

WHERE better to hold a Trafalgar Night celebration than in Trafalgar House?

That being the case, an Indian training establishment was the setting when Lt Cdr James Richards hosted a party to mark the occasion.

Lt Cdr James is attending the Indian Staff Course at the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington, South India, living in Trafalgar House.

The Senior Service invited the British Army and RAF to join in, along with fellow students Cdr Srikanth Koduri from the Indian Navy and Lt Cdr John Stogdill of the US Navy.

"Everything went according to plan until the neighbours started to complain about the re-enactment of the battle with the use of several cases of Diwali firecrackers," said Lt Cdr Richards.

Minister's visit

NEW Defence Secretary Philip Hammond has visited troops in Helmand Province.

The minister flew to Afghan capital Kabul for meetings with senior Allied and Afghan officials.

He then flew on to Lashkar Gah, where he met local commanders for briefings before meeting soldiers from 3 Scots, accompanying them on a foot patrol to the local bazaar.

Last delivery

THE Royal Naval Philatelic Society, which was created in 1972, has announced that it will cease to exist from December 31.

RN Philatelic Officer Robert Fosterjohn has expressed his grateful thanks to all members, and to the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust.

Medals sold

A COLLECTION of three medals, including a silver officer-class Davison's Nile Medal, has been sold by Nantwich auctioneers Peter Wilson for £9,000.

The medals were presented to the Atkinson family in the 19th century, with the Nile Medal being claimed by Thomas Atkinson, a friend of Nelson and described by the admiral as "one of the best Masters I have seen in the Royal Navy."

Atkinson was the Master of HMS Victory at Trafalgar.

Theatre festival is launched



THE 2012 RN Theatre Festival has been officially launched by the Senior Service's theatre association president.

Rear Admiral David Steel, Chief of Staff (Personnel) was supported by rehearsing cast and crew of the Admirals' Players pantomime *Little Red Riding Hood* (pictured).

The festival, which will run from March 5 – April 27, is open to groups representing ships and Naval Service establishments, staffs of flag officers, detached naval units and theatre clubs from Joint Service establishments where Naval Service personnel are assigned.

Full details and rules are in 2011DIN10-038.

Rear Admiral Steel said he was particularly pleased to see the moral component in action with members of the Naval Service, civil servants and their families working together outside of their

normal daily environments.

He continued: "Participation in extramural activities such as amateur dramatics is an excellent way for individuals to develop their communication skills and confidence, and I would ask all Commanding Officers to encourage their people to participate in an existing theatre club or even better start up a new club with a grant from the RNTA."

The RNTA always welcomes new members, whether budding actors, directors or stage crew. Coming up will be a workshop covering lighting, auditions for Spring festival productions and preparations for the summer production of *Much Ado About Nothing* in conjunction with the RSC's Open Stages.

Anyone interested in joining the RNTA should email rntheatreassociation@gmail.com



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Skipton on show at Bradley

MEMBERS of Skipton and District were out raising the profile of the branch at the Bradley Show in North Yorkshire.

The Town Crier opened the show, and the branch standard bearer showed his stamina by taking part in the associated fell race.

The following weekend saw the branch welcome five veterans from HMS Vesper together with families.

There was a display of ship memorabilia – including a scale matchstick model of the old V and W-class destroyer – in the Holy Trinity Church, and Sea Cadets from TS Dolphin took part in the Sunday service, along with the veterans and branch shipmates.

Vesper was a World War 1-vintage destroyer which was due for scrapping in 1939 but was pressed into service escorting wartime convoys along the East Coast.

She saw service at Dunkirk, on Atlantic convoys and was in the van at Omaha Beach on June 6 1944.

The old ship had been adopted by Skipton during Warship Week in 1942, and in the mid-1980s efforts by the RNA to trace crewmen proved fruitful, with a reunion being held in the town in 1986.

Such reunions have continued to this day, and other reminders of the ties include the ship's White Ensign, which is in Holy Trinity, and two commemorative plaques in the town's canal basin.

More Pusser than a matelot

THE new wife of Halifax branch chairman S/M George Cameron might be the widow of an RAF radar technician, but she has taken to dark blue like a duck to water...

George married Beryl Coulthard at Halifax Register Office five years after they first met.

S/M George served in the Mob from 1954 to 1963, joining the RNA in 1984 and serving as branch treasurer until the death of his wife in 1995.

He stepped down for a year, then returned as chairman – a post he retains to this day.

He has also been the branch standard bearer for 25 years and is on the area committee.

Three of his sons served in the Navy, and despite the fact the couple's social life consists of ship reunions and RNA meetings, George admits his wife is more Pusser than he is...

Tales of the sea

A RESIDENT at the Royal Alfred Seafarer's Society home in Surrey was more than happy to encourage youngsters to consider a profession on the high seas during World Maritime Day.

Geoffrey Talbot, aged 87, talked of his Royal Navy career which saw him serve as a mechanic in the jungle of Sri Lanka during the war before taking up a career in the Merchant Navy.

New tradition starts at Pershore

TRADITIONS all have to start somewhere, and Pershore and District branch hope they have started one in the 90th anniversary year of the Poppy Appeal.

2011 was the first year that the new Commemorative Garden was available to feature in Remembrance proceedings in the town.

And with the agreement of the Pershore Royal British Legion, a second poppy wreath was obtained by Pershore branch on behalf of "the people of Pershore and District".

This wreath will be laid each year at the commemorative stone in the new garden

by three pupils from Pershore High School immediately after the main service in the town's abbey.

One of the garden's main instigators, branch secretary S/M Trudy Burge, said: "From the very start, both myself and the RNA members have been keen to involve the local children in creating this piece of history and we invited pupils from Pershore High School to the cutting of the first sod of earth back in March."

S/M Trudy said that who better to represent the people of the town than the future generation, who will continue to care for the garden for years to come.

She added that the commemorative stone and garden have been a "tremendous success", with visitor numbers exceeding their wildest expectations.

"It goes to show the strength of affection for all those currently serving our country and those who have passed," said S/M Trudy.

"The opening of the garden was one of the proudest days of my life and I am so glad that my dad's health has stabilised enough that he will see this new tradition formed.

"I believe Remembrance should be every day, not once a year, and it's wonderful to have such a focal reminder."

Teams dig deep in duel at the quarry

WHILE the branch secretary was otherwise engaged at an Area 4 meeting, six members of Falmouth branch were enjoying themselves in a more strenuous way.

The shipmates took part in a sponsored 'quarryathon' to raise money for Cornish charity BF Adventure, which helps disadvantaged children and young people to believe in themselves and make positive decisions for their future.

Based around three water-filled disused granite quarries at the Goodygrange Activity Centre in Halvasso between Helston and Penryn – run by BF Adventure – the site is perfect for adventure trails and endurance courses of all levels of difficulty.

Hence the quarryathon...

Falmouth branch president S/M Tony Hogg, who recently stood down as CEO of the charity, asked branch chairman S/M Mick Stevens to join him as part of the four-strong Revolving Crew.

When the branch learned of the event, four members (three

ex-WAFUs and an ex-Wren, wife of one of the three) issued a challenge to the Revolving Crew.

Running as Fly-X-Navy, the two teams had their own 'private' match within the competition.

Another 16 teams lined up alongside the RNA rivals, who stormed to third and fourth places.

The Revolving Crew (Tony Hogg, Mick Stevens, John Bray, also a former CEO of the charity, and Falmouth Harbour Pilot Alex Head) had the faster time, but slipped up on bonus points.

Fly-X-Navy (Richard Hallows, Roy Wright, Graham and Gill Deacon), although slightly slower, collected more bonus points, and so, they claim, just beat the Revolving Crew.

However, they did concede that they might not have won the drinking contest afterwards, and agreed to a draw.

Fly-X claimed the Crew had "too many chiefs and not enough indians" – hardly surprising with two ex-CEOs, an ex-Tiffany and a harbour pilot.

One of the challenges was to carry a raw egg around the course



● The Revolving Crew in action

undamaged – Fly-X-Navy would not reveal where they carried theirs, but rumour had it that it was well supported.

The RNA was well advertised during the event, and following the Association's recent rebranding,

S/M Mick wore a fetching white t-shirt, with a copy of the recruitment poster printed on it – and he wondered whether that qualified for a bottle of Pusser's Rum for the poster in the most unusual place...

Farewell to Cumberland

ALMOST two dozen members of the 'original crew' from HMS Cumberland met up in Plymouth to say their last farewells to "the best ship in the fleet" (right).

In 1989 this bunch of old seadogs sweated to prepare the 'Sausage' for sea.

Every vital item that she would ever need, including mattresses, spanners, potatoes, and ammunition, was lovingly placed by hand onto the ship in preparation for any eventuality.

After sailing from Yarrow's in Glasgow, Cumberland was commissioned on Weston Mill Jetty Plymouth – an historic event as she was the first ship to be commissioned on this brand new facility in 1989.

This was the third Original Crew reunion – organised by Steve Wooding – held in Plymouth, and was by far the saddest.

The day started with a trip down the Hamoaze to say farewell to the Cumberland, and then a 'fast cruise' took the Crew out to



sea for one final time together.

Every one of the salts fondly told sea stories of their time on Cumberland.

One of the Crew, CPO Dan Matlin, had locked the gangway the day before and was the last person to leave the ship.

The sad and eventful day ended at the Ford Hotel in Plymouth

which is owned and run by the 'Original NAAFI Manager' Trevor Milton.

The day was an emotional and memorable farewell from the Crew to an unforgettable ship.

If any ex-Cumberland crew member would like to join the Crew reunion, contact Steve at steve.wooding@hotmail.com



● The service at the Dundee International Submarine Memorial

Dundee honours international deeps

A SERVICE of Remembrance has been held at the Dundee International Submarine Memorial to honour almost 300 sailors and commandos who lost their lives in wartime operations from the Scottish port.

Serving submariners from the UK and Norway and veterans and diplomatic representatives from the Russian Federation, Poland, the Netherlands and Norway gathered at the memorial for the service remembering the 296 men who died.

Serving personnel included crew from HNoMS Utstein and a party from HMNB Clyde.

And among the guests was 92-year-old Johannes 'John' Theime, who survived the sinking of the German U-35 in November 1939 and, having settled in Scotland after the war, has been actively involved with the local branch of the Submariners Association for many years.

Special delivery for AOW

A BFPS 3150 postmark of November 11 2011 has been selected by the Royal Naval Philatelic Society for their issue RNSC (8)23, a limited edition of 500 Commemorative First Day Covers entitled 'Celebrating the Association of Wrens' complete with accompanying booklets.

There are two unsigned and three signed versions of this limited edition cover.

The booklet has been produced by the Association of Wrens and records its history and current status, and features a number of photographs.

The cover montage shows an artist's representation of women from the WRNS and the RN in their working environments.

Stamps used include the Second Officer WRNS 1918 stamp from the Royal Mail set 'Naval Uniforms', issued September 17 2009.

For details of the Association, see www.wrens.org.uk

Plans laid for visit

PLANS are being made for another visit to the memorial honouring Algerine-class minesweepers which was dedicated this summer.

S/M Cyril Banks, who served in HMS Ready with the 18th Minesweeping Flotilla off Gold Beach on D-Day, was closely involved with the unveiling of the memorial at Arromanches, which has an impressive museum and the 'circular cinema'.

The memorial stands as tribute to the work of the Algerines, a class of 1,100-ton minesweeper which did sterling service during World War 2 and after in a number of roles, including survey ships, patrol vessels and convoy escort ships – many consider the Algerines to be amongst the finest minesweepers of the war.

It is hoped the 2012 visit will again coincide with D-Day commemorations in Normandy.



French at Trafalgar gathering

AQUITAINE branch in south-west France commemorated the Battle of Trafalgar and the Immortal Memory of Nelson at their monthly lunch in mid-October.

Chairman S/M Ken Napier welcomed the guest of honour, RNA President Vice Admiral John McAnally, who spoke of Naval affairs in his speech, as well as the local help being offered by branches everywhere to sailors who have been and are being made redundant.

Almost 30 French *Amis des Bords* (shipmates) from eight AMMAC branches – the French equivalent of the RNA – joined the 81 branch shipmates for the occasion.

Throughout the year the AMMAC (the *Amicale des Marins et Marins Anciens Combattants*) invite RNA members to their events, and their hospitality is very generous.

On this occasion, 78 tots of (ever popular) Pusser's Rum were distributed by rum bosun Ken Ayling, the branch vice chairman, and his wife, ex-CWren Pam Ayling, the branch welfare secretary.

The President's speech included reminders of joint Royal Navy/French Navy cooperation – HMS Cumberland had formerly escorted the FS Charles de Gaulle in her deployment to the Gulf, before events in Libya, where once again the Royal Navy and French Navy worked together.

He also noted that Napoleon in 1783 had reputedly applied to join the Royal Navy...

Aquitaine branch is affiliated to RFA Wave Ruler, the fast Fleet tanker currently stationed in the Caribbean, and to the new French frigate which bears the same name as the branch.

Shipmates honour Nelson's triumph

SHIPMATES around the UK and beyond put their usual energy into marking the Royal Navy's red-letter day.

Almost 90 people – including the Mayor of the town, Cllr Brenda Johnson – attended the Bourne branch celebration, as did the Station Commander of RAF Wittering, Gp Capt Richard Hill.

The evening included all the expected pomp and ceremony, from Roast Beef of Old England on the table, Ships of the Line and ceremonial duties to the stirring battle background music which accompanied the speeches and the singing of sea shanties.

Derbyshire Submariners managed to secure the attendance of the Royal Navy's second most senior officer, Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, for their dinner at the Spot Banqueting Suite in the city.

Principal guest was lady Soar, who launched Derby's affiliated submarine, HMS Ambush, a year ago.

Durham City held a dinner on October 21 which also celebrated the branch's diamond jubilee – a landmark which was passed in the summer.

Alongside the civic and Naval dignitaries was one of the shipmates who was associated with the branch in 1951, 89-year-old S/M John Burns – another shipmate, 95-year-old Don Appleby, was unable to attend.

Shrewsbury shipmates headed to the Lord Hill Hotel



● Standards at the Church of All Saints, Pavement, in York

for their dinner, attracting more than 170 branch members, guests and representatives of the Association of Wrens, Fleet Air Arm Association, Royal Marines Association and the Royal Society of St George.

Two ratings from HMS Talent, ETs Tobias Turner and Thomas Bennett, who in a joint address kept their audience enthralled with an outline of what life in a modern submarine entails.

The Warwick branch Trafalgar dinner was also an opportunity for the local mayor, Cllr Trudie Offer, to be introduced to her new Mayor's Cadet, AC Jack Fellows, who was piped and marched in

by S/M Taylor, the Bosun for the evening.

Jack's first duty was to escort the Mayor to her seat at the top table, ready for the four-course dinner which she and the other 50 or so guests thoroughly enjoyed.

The Ascot House Hotel was the venue for Harrogate and District's dinner, at which the guests included members from Bradford branch, the Committee and training staff from Harrogate Sea Cadet unit TS Cleopatra, and the local Mayor and Mayoress as well as the MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough, Andrew Jones.

City of Glasgow branch celebrated Nelson's victory and

honoured all seafarers, from the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy and fishing fleets, in a service at Glasgow Cathedral.

The National Standard, the HMS Neptune Volunteer Band and Sea Cadets from TS Galatea and TS Neptune all enjoyed prominent roles in the service, with Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland, Rear Admiral Chris Hockley, inspecting the assembled ranks.

York and District branch and the city branch of the Royal Marines Association held their Trafalgar parade and service at All Saints Church, Pavement.

After the service the parade, including nine standards, paraded through the city and the civic party took the salute on the steps of the Mansion House.

The branch dinner saw 51 members gather at the Elmbank Hotel.

Market Harborough celebrated Nelson's victory with a formal five-course dinner at the Market Harborough Golf Club, at which the guest of honour was Vice Admiral Sir James Perowne.

The admiral gave an updated view of the battle, before proposing the toast to the Immortal Memory.

The White Ensign flew above the Town Hall at Bridport to commemorate the anniversary of Trafalgar.

That evening Bridport branch held their dinner dance at Highland's End in Eype.

Almost 60 members and guests enjoyed a splendid meal, followed by dancing to Steve's Arrival Party Disco.

The Trafalgar Trophy, awarded to the Shipmate of the Year for outstanding service to the branch, was presented to former submariner S/M Brian Cox, the Bridport welfare officer.

Magnificent 7 together once more

A REUNION was held to mark the 62nd anniversary of the start of Artificer Apprentices Series (The Magnificent) 7 at HMS Fiskard, Torpoint.

Hosted at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's Lifeboat Training College in Poole, the agenda started on the Friday afternoon when members who had arrived early joined a conducted tour of the college's training facilities, including the sea survival pool and the bridge simulator.

Friday evening was free but many had booked tables in the roomy Riggers' Restaurant, where several mini-reunions took place.

Members and guests took advantage of the Indian summer to explore the surrounding areas, visit Bournemouth and take ferry rides round Poole Harbour.

The anniversary dinner took place in the evening, for which members had the use of the Harbour View Restaurant on the top floor.

The college lived up to its reputation in that its standards are very high indeed – any problems were dealt with by a very efficient staff who were always cheerful and did their best to help.

The college is an excellent venue for a similar function and it also offers accommodation on a bed-and-breakfast basis at very reasonable rates. – the ex-Tiffies had no hesitation in recommending the college to any entry seeking a good venue on the South Coast; at least two members wanted to know if the group could go there again.

For further information visit www.rnli.org.uk/college

Area Seven standard is laid up

TWEEKSBURY branch had the honour of hosting a ceremony to lay up the old Area Seven standard and dedicate a new one at the town's abbey.

Tewkesbury branch spokesman Peter Godwin said: "A real honour has been bestowed on us and the abbey to house the standard."

"It's a significant event. The current standard, as important to us as colours in battle, is more than 30 years old and quite tatty."

Crowds of spectators looked on as the proud parade marched through the town, with 27 standards flying from the association, Scouts, Cubs, Sea Cadets and the Royal British Legion.

National President Vice Admiral John McAnally took the salute, while the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Dame Janet Trotter, and High Sheriff Mark Heywood also attended.

There was a reception with sticky buns and a tot for standard bearers afterwards.

There were many people to thank for the success of the event, including RNA shipmates who travelled from far and wide; the Tewkesbury branches of the RNA, RBL and the Sea Cadets (TS Otter); the staff of Tewkesbury Abbey, including the Rev Canon Paul Williams, and the branch chaplain the Rev Canon Roger Grey; the local police for their efficient and professional handling of various road closures to enable the parade to go ahead – and last but not least, the local residents of the town who turned out to support the branch and area.

By George...

FOR those of you wondering who the mysterious S/M George was celebrating his 90th birthday at Hanworth branch, as reported in last month's *Navy News*, we can reveal that it was none other than former Boy 2nd Class George Drewett.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery submarine in our October edition (right) was HMS Finwhale, which was a Porpoise-class boat, and A Williams of Reading wins £50 for giving the correct answers.

This month's mystery ship, pictured above, is a modified Type 12 frigate completed in Belfast in the summer of 1961.

She was fitted to take helicopters in the early 70s, and met her end in 1986 at the hands of a nuclear submarine – (1) what was her name, and (2) what was the name of the boat that sank her?

We have removed her pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is January 13 2012. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our February 2012 edition. The



competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.

Now, cast your minds back to the September mystery ship. We said it was RFA Hebe and her ill-fated sister was RFA Bacchus.

Why did we say that, when we knew it was the other way round? Why, when the ship in our picture has BACCHUS on her bow, and the number A404 on her hull?

We knew it was Bacchus, and so did most of you – about 95 per cent of the replies correctly named the ships.

All we can do is apologise for the intervention of the *Navy News* gremlin at the production stage, and to show just how sorry we are we have held a second draw from all the correct answers, and the second lucky winner of Bacchus's largesse is Mr D Bond, of Cramlington.

MYSTERY PICTURE 202

Name

Address

My answers (1)

(2)

FORMER shipmates from one of the Royal Navy's two largest aircraft carriers met up for a reunion overlooking the building of the next big thing.

The men of HMS Eagle met at the North Queensferry Hotel, overlooking the Firth of Forth bridges and Rosyth, where the new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers are under construction.

'Call the Hands' was piped early on Saturday for members keen enough to brave the wet weather and embark on the unique visit to Babcock International's yard at Rosyth, voted the highlight of the weekend by most.

After a video presentation and questions and answer session, their hosts took them on a tour around the base where sections of the new supercarrier were being assembled, and members were surprised at the progress made.

Other planned visits during the weekend included the former Royal Yacht Britannia.

After the reception on the Saturday evening, the Nautical Gala Dinner was served which included the Naval tradition of 'Up Spirits' to the resounding music of *Rule Britannia*.

Proceeds from the Grand Draw were doubled to £432 through one of the guests, from a charity option for staff of the National Grid; the money will go to the Irskine Veterans Hospital/Care Home in Renfrewshire.

Main organiser and membership secretary S/M Danny du Feu praised the hospitality they received in Scotland, especially from the management and staff of the hotel, and said next November's reunion would be held in Portsmouth, where Eagle decommissioned in 1972.



● Shipmates at the HMS Eagle Reunion 2011 gather in the rain at Rosyth in anticipation of their 'Queen Elizabeth Carrier Construction tour' at Rosyth. Behind them is the lower bow section of HMS Queen Elizabeth, while sections of the carrier are being assembled in the dry dock to the right

Picture: Ex-CPO(Phot) Danny du Feu



Enough, minister

'WHERE has this year gone?', asks Kim Richardson of the Naval Families Federation.

It has been particularly busy for the Naval Service as they have risen to the challenge of delivering all that has been asked of them worldwide.

When I read the headlines about what we have been doing, it makes me feel proud, although I am sure that what we read is only the tip of the iceberg because as we all know – good news doesn't sell newspapers!

These past few weeks have also been busy for the NFF.

The autumn is when we have several high-level meetings on behalf of families to prepare for, ensuring that we maximize the opportunities during this high-level access is key.

I promised to let families know what I said to the Minister for Defence Personnel Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan.

The Minister was very receptive and listened to what was said. He didn't fob us off. It was a good meeting.

So here goes, this is a flavour of what you asked me to say to him...

I began with a positive!

I do have to admit that I was struggling to find one but I did!

A few weeks ago I spent the day with a group of people from the Directorate for Children and Young People determining how to allocate the £3 million Fund for State Schools with Service Children.

I acknowledged the Fund itself, which is great news for our families.

I also acknowledged the gusto with which the Directorate has approached dealing with administering it.

Ensuring this Fund is allocated properly is essential.

It is about checking that all parts of the country get a bite of the cherry and that all Service children see some tangible benefit.

The process has been good. The amount of work involved cannot be underestimated.

I asked the Minister and the powers that be in MOD to take a pause when these great decisions are made and give some thought in advance as to how we are going to administer and staff the process as I suspect that there have been a few sleepless nights along the way and we can't afford to get it wrong.

That opener neatly led me on to where the Naval Service family is sitting today.

The Minister came to our offices a few weeks ago and met some family members who told him in their own words what their concerns were.

The visit went very well and the Minister commented afterwards that he gained a lot from it.

At our meeting I expanded on what the families had said. I explained that there is a sense amongst families that this Government is committing to too much too quickly.

The Naval Service is proud, it does not sit easily to say 'sorry no can do', so they don't.

I am fully aware that in terms of tasking, the Royal Navy very much determines who goes where and for how long.

But I would counter that



● Kim Richardson

by saying they are a can-do organisation. Who picks up the fallout from that approach? Serving men and women? Yes! The family? Absolutely!

I commented on operational tempo and the future manpower and structure of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines making the point that if we get the size and structure wrong we will not be able to buy things back once they are lost.

Maximum effort needs to go into getting it right in order to ensure our families don't pick up the fallout.

I have mentioned separated service to the Minister before but brought it up again.

I explained that the inability to take leave has become a bigger issue for families over the past year. Down time and leave are important to harmony in the home.

We are building up to the Olympics and the Queens Diamond Jubilee next year. There will be a requirement to provide serving personnel to help.

I used this opportunity to ask the Minister to remember that we do not have a bottomless pit of personnel to draw on and these events take place over the summer months when children are on school holidays and families try and spend some time together.

We must get the balance right.

I asked for an update on where we are with Joint Personnel Administration (JPA).

There were good reasons for doing this that falls out of our link with Hasler Company, part of the Royal Navy's Recovery Pathway based in Plymouth, and the work we are doing in support of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

We will have an update on this area in the next *Navy News* and also *Homeport*.

I then moved on to our favourite topic, housing, where I registered the NFF team's worries for the future.

I asked the Minister for some serious reassurance that whilst our families are managing all of the above they are not now building up to being let down on the housing front.

What do we mean by that?

Well in a nutshell, we question whether the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) will be sufficiently manned to provide an effective service following the departure of staff

that have been selected for redundancy?

I registered concern that reducing the number of housing officers will make moving in and out of Service Families Accommodation a more difficult process, particularly for those families who want to make a move over the summer months.

In short is the system going to be robust enough to cope?

The DIO keep us well informed. The Minister keeps us informed. We appreciate that, but I believe we need to do more, so I asked if we could reinvigorate our Ministerial meetings with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

We will keep you posted on developments in this key area.

Other topics for discussion were uncertainty, the impact of redundancy, Continuity of Education Allowance and the New Employment Model and what the future holds for all.

Christmas is fast approaching and I sense there are going to be a few families, alongside those in the public and private sector, who will feel they have little to celebrate.

More than ever before our serving personnel need to deploy knowing their families are well looked after.

All three Services have a part to play here. For example, we can't lay the blame for not securing school places at the door of local authorities when we are not doing all we could be doing on the assigning side.

The Services should be doing their bit and looking at how, and most importantly when, they move their people.

We actually need some good news. I asked the Minister to look at what he could do in the short term.

The launch of the Armed Forces Home Ownership Scheme pilot went well. The Long Service Advance of Pay is too little. What our families want to do is to buy a house. How can we help them do it?

Actions fell out of this meeting. In the next edition of *Navy News* we will tell you what they are.

If this resonates with you, good! If you don't agree with what is said, then it is probably because you haven't contacted us to talk about what you do think.

If you would like another perspective given please get in touch. Your views inform our debate.

The previous First Sea Lord, Admiral Band used to call the NFF the Navy's conscience.

Have we pricked yours?

THE latest NFF November e-update has been released. It provides a round-up of NFF activities, as well as news affecting RN and RM families and personnel.

The November edition also includes:

■ insurance liability for those living in Service Family Accommodation – are you covered?

■ details on the upcoming review of Defence Medical Services

■ the Money Advice Service healthcheck

■ information on the Service Pupil Premium

■ the Annington Challenge – 14 to 18-year-olds from Forces families, living in Service communities, could have the chance for an eight-day adventure course.

Join the mailing list by emailing info@nff.org.uk



Nelsonian talent dines on board Victory

THE Navy Board hosted a Trafalgar Night Dinner at the end of October on board HMS Victory for 70 serving personnel, from able rates and marines to lieutenants and Royal Marine captains (pictured right).

The dinner was held to recognise the achievements of all those in the Service and the ethos that makes the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary serve this nation as they do – with skill, commitment and courage.

Personnel from right across the Service and from all corners of the country were nominated by their COs or line managers to attend the dinner which was held on the starboard side of the lower gun deck, where the men of Nelson's Navy bravely and loyally lived and worked.

Amongst the diners were those recently returned from service in Afghanistan and off Libya; those recognised for, through their fine example of leadership, making a real difference in their unit; and those who have consistently demonstrated, throughout their long and distinguished careers, immense loyalty.

Other guests included Peter Luff, the Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology and Olympic hopefuls Lt Cdr Penny Clark and Lt Peter Reed.

Before toasting *The Immortal Memory*, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope the First Sea Lord

and Chief of Naval Staff spoke of today's Navy containing, "a rich and deep pool of Nelsonian talent that is our battle-winning

edge both now and in the future as the Royal Navy delivers the Future Navy Vision out to 2025."



Special nurses, special pay

THIS month's Drafty is dedicated to the subject of Specialist Pay for Nurses.

Armed Forces personnel are allocated to a pay range on the basis of their rank and profession, branch or trade.

JSP 754 titled *Tri-Service publication for all Service pay and charges* is the authoritative publication for all Service personnel, their line managers and specialist administration staffs, to determine entitlement to pay and the criteria for the payment of appropriate charges.

Military salary is determined by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB). The AFPRB is drawn from eminent civilians of widely differing backgrounds, one of whom is always a retired senior member of the Armed Forces.

It is their role to advise the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State (SoS) for Defence on the levels of pay and charges, and some allowances which they consider appropriate for members of the Armed Forces up to and including the rank of OF6.

Another essential element of the work AFPRB is to ensure the pay of the Armed Forces is broadly comparable with pay levels in civilian life.

This involves recommendations for specialist pay to specific groups in the Armed Forces to assist with recruitment and retention requirements.

A separate pay spine and specialist pay for all Armed Forces Nurses was introduced on the 1st of August 2009.

These specialist pay rates and the associated regulations apply to both Regular and Reserve Forces personnel.

This article aims to explain the regulations currently applied to specialist nurses pay.

■ **Regulations for Payment**

Specialist pay for nursing personnel is payable at two levels



Drafty's corner

as a daily rate to all qualified individuals.

Level 2: Level 2 is payable to all Qualified Nursing Officers and Nursing Other Ranks filling competent Specialist Pay annotated appointments and fulfilling the following criteria:

Achievement of Defence Nursing Operational Competency Framework (DNOCF) Level 2 in an endorsed speciality with at least six months experience in the speciality.

Individuals must also be assigned to post requiring specialist DNOCF Level 2 competence.

Level 3: Level 3 is payable to all Qualified Nursing Officers and Nursing Other Ranks filling competent Specialist annotated appointments and fulfil the following criteria:

A qualified specialist nurse in an endorsed MOD nursing speciality. An individual will be deemed a specialist nurse and qualified for specialist pay purposes providing they hold a ENB 'long' Course qualification or completion of a

recognised programme of study and practice in a specialist care pathway.

This must be in a MOD-endorsed speciality that leads to the acquisition of 60 or more Academic credits at Level 3 (this relates to Taxonomy Level 3 of the DNOCF).

The qualified specialist nurse remains deployable as a qualified specialist with the full skill set and currency expected of a qualified specialist as determined by the Surgeon General's policy.

■ **Commencement of payment**

Payments to individuals will commence as detailed below:

Level 2: Individuals must complete their Level 2 DNOCF to qualify for Level 2 payment.

Annex A from the DNOCF must be completed and sent to the Career Manager to initiate competency pay.

This will be initiated from the date on the signed document.

Level 3: Individuals must send a copy of their Level 3 certificate to their Career Manager and SP Qualified will be initiated.

Career Managers are aware of the delay in certificates post-qualification being issued by awarding authorities and will commence SP Q with ratification of results from an external source such as letter/e-mail through their line managers.

Normal rules of Specialist Pay will then apply iaw JSP 754 Chap 6 Section 1.

■ **Summary**

There is recent evidence of an individual not being paid specialist pay to which they were entitled for almost two years, therefore the importance of ensuring that the Career Manager is kept up to date with changes which are likely to affect the award of Specialist Pay should not be underestimated.

Individuals or their line managers can seek advice from DNPERS Career Managers.



Log in to the Logs intranet online

A NEW intranet site has been launched which provides an Information Gateway for members of the Royal Navy Logistics Branch.

The website hosted on the Defence Intranet has been put together by the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) as part of its modern learning strategy.

It is designed to provide a single portal to all the information that a Maritime Logistician needs to carry out his or her job with links to books of reference, joint service publications and other intranet sites across the Service.

It also contains important information on the Logistics Branch – such as details of the Mentoring Scheme and key events – as well as providing a Virtual Learning capability.

Cdr Heber Ackland, the Commandant of the DMLS, said: "The DMLS Maritime Logistics Gateway supports both the Logistics Branch's Communications Strategy and the Defence College of Logistics and Personnel Administration's (DCLPA) modern learning programme.

"What is unique about it is that it is specifically designed for the operational user in the Fleet and, in most cases, simply links him or her by a click or two to the source of information they require giving them control over the information available to them and how to find it.

"I hope that users of the website will shape the development of this shared resource in the future and help to exploit its full utility."

The new website is available by clicking on <http://artdteams.tafmisweb.tafmis.r.mil.uk/teams/dcl/dmls/default.aspx>.

It is available to Logisticians and other personnel with access to the Defence Intranet and also by members of the branch serving at sea.

Second wave imminent

THE SECOND round of the Naval Service Redundancy Programme (known as Tranche 2) will take place in 2012.

A Tri-Service Tranche 2 Announcement will be made early in the New Year with the same process followed as for the first round (Tranche 1), with a Defence Instruction and Notice (DIN) published giving details of those ranks, rates, branches and specialisations of personnel known as 'redundancy fields' that will be considered by the redundancy selection boards.

Tranche 1 was closely linked to reductions in the number of Front Line units, whereas Tranche 2 will also be affected by the drawdown of Non-Front Line posts in organisations such as Navy Command Headquarters, Naval Training Establishments, the Permanent Joint Headquarters and the MOD.

For all those selected, redundancy will be compulsory, with decisions on who will leave the Service driven by the numbers and skills of people needed for the Navy of the future.

Personnel who fall within the redundancy fields will be able to apply to be considered for redundancy if they wish, although there is no guarantee that as applicants they will be selected.

As was the case for Tranche 1, some of those who do not apply may be made redundant.

Applicants who are selected for redundancy will receive six months notice to leave the Service, while non-applicants selected for redundancy will receive 12 months notice.

Career Managers may be able to allow people who wish to leave earlier to do so.

Notification of Tranche 2 redundancies will occur five to six months after the announcement.

The difficulties of conducting notification on a Friday are understood and a preferred announcement date that is earlier

in the week has been requested; this will be coordinated with the other two Services.

As we go to press, the dates for Tranche 2 Announcement and Notification are not confirmed but will be published in a Defence Internal Brief (DIB) and through the normal communication channels, including the *Navy News* and Naval Families' Federation (NFF) websites as soon as the Tri-Service plan has been agreed.

2011DIN01-016 (Naval Service Redundancy Programme Excluded Cadres) contains the details of those groups of Service Personnel who will not be considered at any stage of the programme.

At this stage no other groups can be excluded from the programme but, if any are identified, these will be announced.

An estimate of pension and redundancy entitlements can be obtained via the Armed Forces Redundancy Calculator which can be accessed at www.mod-rc.co.uk.

It should be noted that the information provided by the Armed Forces Redundancy Calculator is only indicative and does not constitute a formal statement of the payments that an individual will receive on exit from the Service if made redundant.

Personnel considering applying for redundancy may wish to seek independent financial advice.

All personnel selected for redundancy will qualify for the same resettlement package that they would receive had they completed the commission or engagement on which they are serving.

The capacity of the tri-Service resettlement system has been increased to cope with the number of extra personnel leaving the Armed Forces.

Almost all RN Service leavers have so far been able to access their preferred resettlement courses, but whilst every effort is made to meet individual preferences, this

cannot be guaranteed.

Much useful feedback has been received after Tranche 1 and lessons identified are being used to develop the Redundancy Programme.

Importantly, these changes will not change the 'look and feel' of the process and the format of the DIN, the Naval Service Redundancy website and the briefing information sent to units will be familiar to all those who had access to the information for Tranche 1.

Your feedback is encouraged and should be delivered through the command chain – the Command Warrant Officers regularly visit units and establishments and welcome the opportunity to hear your views and to answer your questions on Redundancy.

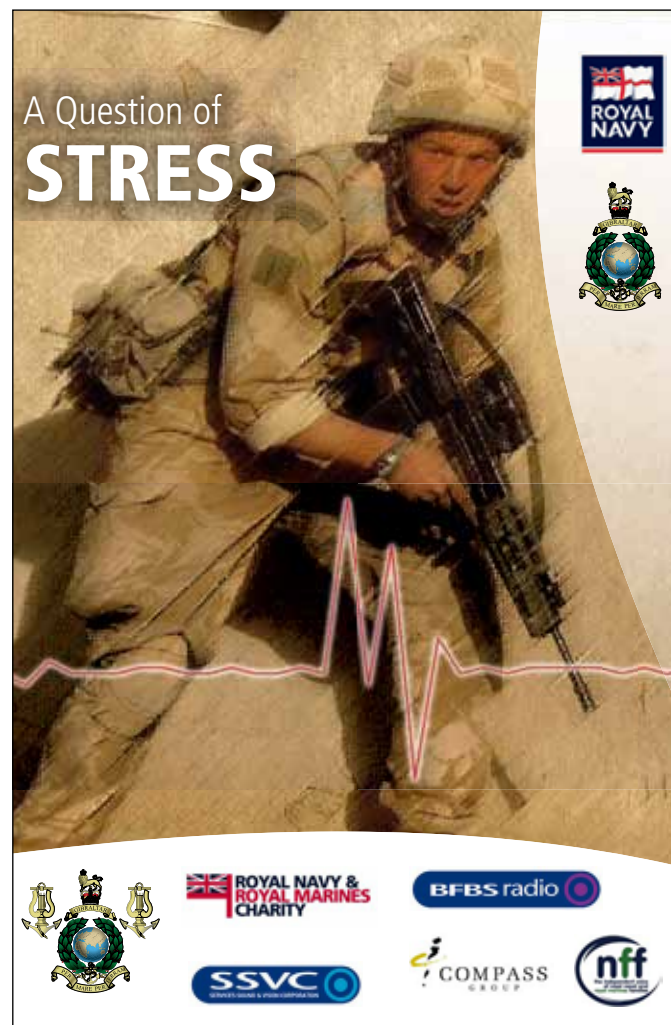
The Redundancy Programme will complete in 2015, with further Tranches announced as necessary.

All personnel are encouraged to regularly visit the Naval Service Redundancy website on the Defence intranet, the RNCom members' area at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/community and the NFF Website at www.nff.org.uk for the latest information on the Redundancy Programme and for answers to FAQs.

Where advice is needed it should be sought through the Divisional/Regimental system in the first instance, but where necessary, the Fleet Redundancy Cell in Navy Command Headquarters will also answer queries relating to the redundancy process.

They can be contacted as follows:

Fleet Redundancy Cell (FRC)
Room G43
West Battery
Whale Island
Portsmouth
Hants PO2 8DX
Mil: 93832 8987
Civ: +44 (0) 2392 628987
DII: **FLEET-REDUNDANCY CELL MAILBOX**
Internet: Fleet-RedundancyCellMailbox@mod.uk



Handling stress

THE DVD *A question of stress* is a short film aimed at answering families' queries relating to traumatic stress. It falls into three distinct areas and touches on a wide range of stress issues.

The DVD, which is important viewing for both families and Service personnel, has been issued to NFF, HIVEs, NPFS and RNCom.

For further information, or to obtain a copy, please email: FLEET-TRIteamMAILBOX@mod.uk.

Air Engineers get registered

ON WEDNESDAY October 19 the Air Engineering Branch officially added the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMEchE) to its list of Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs) offering streamlined routes to Professional Registration with the Engineering Council.

Along with the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) and the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) there are now three options for suitably qualified and experienced personnel of the Air Engineering Branch to gain formal recognition of their professional skills.

So, what is Professional Registration and why is it relevant to Air Engineers?

The Engineering Council licenses PEIs (such as IMechE, IET and RAeS) to award professional qualifications to individuals who meet the internationally-recognised UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence (UK-SPEC).

There are three levels of qualification that can be awarded depending on an individual's qualifications, experience and levels of responsibility: Engineering Technician (EngTech), Incorporated Engineer (IEng) and Chartered Engineer (CEng).

The Air Engineering Policy and Plans team at Navy Command HQ has worked with the IET and IMechE to map the Air Engineering Rating and Officer career structures against the UK-SPEC competences and there

are now clearly-defined career milestones, from Leading Air Engineering Technician (LAET) level upwards, at which, by virtue of training and experience, an individual will be eligible to apply for professional registration.

Individuals must be a member of a PEI to gain their professional qualifications but the institutions offer far more than just a route to professional registration.

For an annual membership fee (there is always a cost involved...) each PEI provides members with monthly engineering magazines, regular presentations and seminars, courses, access to the institutions' conference and library facilities, networking opportunities, legal and financial advice, private healthcare discounts and much more.

For Commander Air Engineers and above, by virtue of their responsibilities, opportunities exist to extend their PEI membership to become a Fellow which offers additional benefits.

For those planning on a long and fulfilling careers in the Service having a professional qualification (and the corresponding letters after your name) provides kudos and is increasingly becoming a mandatory requirement for certain appointments.

For those with intentions of moving into a second career outside the Service a professional qualification is a benefit, and often an essential requirement, for gaining a job in the engineering sector.

RNCom moves to new site

THE information and forums formerly located at the Royal Navy Community Website (RNCom) (www.rncom.mod.uk) can now be accessed through their new home within the re-launched Royal Navy website at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/community.

All previous RNCom forums are now closed.

Newly-created forums in the Community area of the Royal Navy site are accessible to Royal Navy personnel, family and friends within the members area.

Users will need to register for the new Website at <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/profile/register> and follow the guidance.

Parent power at Navy Command HQ

THE Naval Service Parents' Network (NSPN) held a very successful launch event on Monday October 17, timed perfectly to coincide with National Parents Week.

The aim of the event was to publicise the Parents' Network and explain how it can support and advise Naval Service parents and Line Managers.

The event was well attended with 2SL, DNPers and DNPS showing their support as well as representatives from NPFS, Royal Marines Welfare and the HIVE.

Lt Cdr Vanessa Murphy, who established the NSPN, was delighted to see so many people wanting to find out about the network.

The NSPN plays a vital role in helping to raise awareness of the issues facing working parents and in providing information to all personnel with parental responsibilities.

It acts as a support network which can help to reduce work-related stress and increase a feeling of being appreciated by the organisation.

The NSPN is also an important

conduit to senior management about parental issues.

The Second Sea Lord, who is a parent himself, said at the event: "The Parents' Network is a fantastic initiative and is yet further tangible evidence that the Naval Service supports and values its people, in our case those who need to match their careers in the RN with nurturing the next generation."

The NSPN has recently launched a Maternity Buddy Scheme which is a system where women who have taken maternity leave at some stage in their career and returned to work share their experience with women who are currently pregnant or on maternity leave.

The 'relationship' can commence once the pregnancy has been confirmed and will continue until the individual feels that they no longer require the advice and support.

For further information on the NSPN or the Maternity Buddy Scheme contact Lt Cdr Vanessa Murphy (93832) 5497, email Fleet-DNPS NSPN Group Mailbox or look at the NSPN website on the Defence Intranet.

● The Naval Service Parents' Network launches at Navy Command HQ





NOTICEBOARD

Brompton memories sought

LOCAL volunteers in the Brompton Research Study Group are looking for memories of Brompton.

If you visited, worked or lived in Brompton near Chatham in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, then the researchers are keen to hear from you.

If you are in the neighbourhood, there is an open day on January 13, 2012, from 1.30pm to 3.30pm, at the Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive in Chatham.

This session is part of a bigger project exploring what it was like to live in Brompton from the age of sail onwards.

The research project is a partnership of local residents and organisations, including English Heritage, Royal Engineers Museum, and Chatham World Heritage.

It is keen to document and preserve real-life stories from the area, as well as a wider range of sources including the census, local newspapers and maps.

The results of the project will be made available to the public next year.

For more information, contact Nicola Moy on 01634 334319 or chathamworldheritage@medway.gov.uk.

Due to a short production cycle for our January issue, entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts must be received by **December 2**

Reunions

JANUARY 2012
HMS Illustrious Association's Annual Service of Remembrance will be held at St Mary Aldermar, Bow Lane, London on Tuesday, January 17th, 13.00 to 14.00. Contact F Garton 07985 196908.

FEBRUARY 2012
83 Recruitment, HMS Ganges 1966: Looking for members of 332 Class for a reunion with their Chief, Harry Burgon. Those not yet found are Ken Hall, Jim Hutchison, Steve Jenkins and John Clarkson. The reunion will take place at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent ME7 5QT from February 3 to 4. Please get in touch with Keith Morison at keithmorison@msn.com or tel: 07925 192984.

MARCH 2012
HMS Vernon: Roedean School seeks those who served at HMS Vernon 1940-45 for reunion Spring 2012. Contact Zoe Marlow, Roedean School, Roedean Way, Brighton BN2 5RQ.

HMS Brilliant: 30th Anniversary Reunion takes place from March 23 to 25 at Livermead House Hotel, Torquay. Further details at www.hmsbrilliant.com

APRIL 2012
HMS Aisne, last commission 1965-68: The third reunion will take place at the Maritime Club, Portsmouth from April 13 to 14. All ranks, rates and partners welcome. For full details contact Nigel Jest at nigeljest@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 07531 546185.

Loch Class Frigates Association: Annual reunion takes place at The Ramada Bristol City Hotel, Bristol from April 27 to 30. All members of the association welcome. For details please contact Andrew Nunn Hon. Sec LCFA at andrew.nunn@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 0117 950 5835 or see the website <http://www.lochclassfrigates.com> Membership is open to all who served on any of the Loch Class ships or their variants (Bay Class, Admirals Yachts, survey ships and repair ships). Some of these types of ships have their own associations but you can always join both.

MAY 2012
HMS Impregnable/Drake Association: Reunion will be held in Plymouth from May 11 to 12. Former personnel from Impregnable and Drake ships (including Drake Association) are welcome to join us. Further information can be obtained from the secretary at hawkins75@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 0121 532 6141.

HMS Ganges Association: Next year sees the 30th anniversary of the formation of the HMS Ganges Association and we will celebrate this special occasion at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool from May 11 to 14. The reunion not only reunites old boys who trained together, but also those who have become friends from meeting at previous reunions. If interested, contact the association at communications@hmsgangesassoc.org or tel: 0845 900 2782 for more details, including the easy payment

scheme and disabled facilities at the hotel.
HMS Ambuscade Association: The 10th Anniversary Reunion will take place at the Crewe Arms Hotel, Crewe from May 11 to 13. This special reunion will also commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Falklands War so is expected to be the biggest ever. The weekend includes a day at Chester Races as guests of the Cheshire Regiment, an informal Friday night gathering and the Association Dinner on the Saturday with entertainment from Shep Wooley. Contact Mark Brocklehurst at mark@sharplesgroup.com or see the website at <http://www.ambuscade.org.uk> or tel: weekdays on 01925 839592.

HMS Cavalier Association: Reunion will take place from May 18 to 21 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. Further information can be obtained from David Shardlow at davemooseman@aol.com or tel: 01163 678134.

HMS Cambrian Association: Our next reunion for all who served on board the ship at any time will be at the Apollo Hotel, Birmingham, over the weekend of May 18, 19 and 20, 2012. Any old shipmates not yet in touch should contact Don Macdonald on 01344 774386.

HMS Solebay Association will be holding its 15th annual reunion from May 18 to 21, at the De Vere Barony Castle Hotel, near Edinburgh EH45 8QW. A full weekend of activities is planned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ship paying off for the last time. All ex-Solebays and their guests are welcome. For further details contact Malcolm Clarke at Malcolm@solebay.org or tel: 0117 962 2500 (evenings).

801 NAS Falklands Reunion: A reunion for those who served on 801 NAS Sea Harriers during the Falklands will be held at RNAS Yeovilton on May 26. For further information contact John Keenan at john.keenan23@btinternet.com or tel: 07780 661569.

OCTOBER 2012
HMS Arethusa Association: 24th annual reunion from October 5 to 8 at the Three Queens Hotel, Burton upon Trent. All welcome. Contact Tom Sawyer, Honorary Secretary at rolandsawyer@sky.com or tel: 01653 628171 or write to 6 Sycamore Close, Slingsby, York YO62 4BG, North Yorkshire.

Bay Class Frigates Association: Reunion at the Esplanade Hotel, Scarborough from October 12 to 14, 2012. All ex-Bay Class welcome. Contact Doug Turk at doug.turk@ntlworld.com or tel: 01252 378629 for details.

HMS Lowestoft Association: Reunion will take place at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent from October 26 to 28. All who served in HMS Lowestoft during her 25 years in service (1961-86) are welcome to attend. For further details please contact Richie Farman at richiefarman@googlemail.com or the website <http://www.hmslowestoft.co.uk/home.htm> or tel: 07775 793778.

Ask Jack

Derek Lynch: Bill Young is trying to find Derek Lynch who he was at school with until 1966. They both attended Strathbungo Secondary School, Glasgow and left in June 1966. Derek went for commission in the Royal Navy at this time and remained in the service for several years. Bill doesn't know what rank he attained. If Derek reads this or someone knows of his whereabouts could they contact Bill at wiliegyyoung@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 01236 739109.

Derek Crowter: Mr B Crowter is searching for his cousin Derek Crowter. He has written to his last known address in Portsmouth to no avail. He believes that Derek may now be in the Bracklesham/Seisey areas. If anyone knows of Derek's whereabouts could they contact his cousin at Flat 24 Mayfield, 74 Hershham Road, Walton on Thames, Surrey KT12 2NU.

HMS Diomed: I served as a CWEA during the final commission of HMS Diomed before she was sold on to the Pakistani Navy. My daughter was christened onboard just prior to the de-commissioning, using the ship's bell for the ceremony. Her name was engraved as the last person to be christened when a Royal Naval ship. Recently I have been trying to find the whereabouts of the bell to take my daughter Catherine Mary White (now aged 24) to see the bell. It was my understanding that the bell was passed to Hull City Council for safekeeping as there was an affiliation between the council and the ship, but upon making enquiries with the council they can throw no light on the transfer of the bell to themselves. Could anyone who may know of the whereabouts of the bell contact me David White at nokkawhite@virginmedia.com or write to 19 Liddiards Way, Purbrook, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 5QW.

HMS Bruce Association: I am compiling a Book of Remembrance of persons who served at HMS Bruce between 1947 and 1950. If anyone knows of such persons who have died between 1950 and 1990 could they let me know as soon as possible please. I require Name, Initials, Rank and year of death. Contact the Secretary Mr D T Heath on 0121 532 4058 or write to 72 Westmead Drive, Oldbury, Warley, West Midlands B68 8QB.

Artie Shaw: Edward Poller is seeking former shipmate Artie Shaw. Artie was a radio operator when Edward was serving on Gurkha, Nubian and Cochran in the 1970s and early 1980s. If anyone knows the whereabouts of Artie could they contact Edward on 07763198902 or write to 11 Shawhead Avenue, Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire ML5 4HT.

RNAS Yeovilton, Nigel A Dark: I left the UK in 1968 and have been living in South Africa since then. I last saw my friend in 1963. His name is Nigel Andrew (or Alexander) Dark and I know that in 1964 he was at the Naval Flying School, RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset. He would now be 66 years of age. During the ten years that I knew him, he was always interested in ships and aircraft. He made contact with our old school two years ago but unfortunately they didn't make a note of his address. If anyone knows of his whereabouts could they contact Peter Fielding at jagmp@telkomsa.net or write to PO Box 1328, Scottburgh, 4180, South Africa.

HMS Whitaker: Stanley Fox was serving on board Whitaker (K-580, formerly DE-571) shortly before it was destroyed by U483 in November 1943. Stanley was serving as a wireless telegraph operator until being discharged from the frigate in late October. He would like to make contact with any surviving shipmates or their families. Contact his son Christopher on xanthus@hotmail.com.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info
RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearchpgrc@tnt.co.uk
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.mrmc.org.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk
Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafo.org.uk
RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9251 0354, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Assignments

Cdr Robert G Pedre to be CO HMS Richmond from January 10 2012.
Lt Cdr Roderick J Strathern to be CO HMS Victory from December 12.

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Deaths

Lt Cdr Anthony Spender DSC. Joined as a Special Entry Cadet 1937 and served as a midshipman in Barham when war broke out and was also on board December 1940 when she collided with her escort Duchess in the Mull of Kintyre. He moved on to Manchester and then Excellent. Promoted to S/Lt he volunteered for submarine service and served with Tribune (Atlantic convoys) then Seraph (as 1st Lt) for covert operations. 1943 he took command of Sirdar which, during sea trials, made an involuntary dive taking her way beyond the normal diving depth for an S-class submarine and burying her bow in mud. After attempting various manoeuvres in a bid to break free he was left with the unscientific option but well-worn trick of 'dancing ship' where the crew formed a chain climbing up to the stern carrying weights and danced. Suddenly after a shudder the depth gauges spun round and Sirdar shot upwards. After this he took Sirdar to join the Eighth Fleet, patrolling off Malaysia and Borneo and sinking a number of enemy vessels for which he was awarded a DSC. Settling sail from Fremantle, Sirdar spent 49 days on patrol over the Christmas of 1944 which was the longest time away from base for any S-class submarine – a new record. Post-war he spent two years mainly in the Far East as captain of Alfray before joining the training ship Devonshire. After a spell with the Fleet Air Arm at Yeovilton and in Malta, he joined Naval Intelligence in Hong Kong. After further spells in Gibraltar and at the Admiralty in London he left the Navy in 1969. He returned to sea with the Merchant Navy in the 1970s. October 10. Aged 91.

Ken 'Johnno' Johnson. PO FC1. Served 1942-57 in St George, Howe, Ajax, Finisterre, Liverpool, Vernon, Agincourt and St Vincent. August 18. Aged 84.

Derek Robinson. ERA. Served in Sheffield. Standard bearer for RNERA and HMS Sheffield Association. October 16. Aged 80.
David George Frances. LAM FAA. Served 1953-66 in Centaur, Victorious, Seahawk and Yeovilton. October 14. Aged 74.
Geoffrey Emerson. Ordinary Seaman. Joined Ganges and served in Charity and the aircraft carrier Warrior; also Liverpool (1950-52) and a member of the association. October 15. Aged 77.
'Jack' Walsh. Served in Nelson and Caprice. RN Engineerroom Association. October 24.

'Mick' Mitchell. LME. Served 22 years in HMS Reggio, Chaser, Leopard, Brocklesby, Verulam, Undaunted and Wakeful. RN Engineerroom Association. October 30. Aged 75.

Leslie 'Les' Blackie. Ldg Telegraphist. Joined St George 1940 and first ship Indomitable; saw service in Mediterranean and Korea. October 25. Aged 88.

Mary Weedon (née Farminer). Ldg Wren. Served 1940-45. After basic training she was drafted to the Royal Naval College, Greenwich where she served Sir Winston Churchill on a number of occasions. October 27. Aged 89.

Trevor 'Bummy' Cartwright. Served as an AB, Bosun's Mate on board Peacock 1953-54 and a member of the association. October 19.

Pat Beresford. CSPTI. Served 1946-71. Joined Ganges as a Boy Seaman and on the PT staff of numerous ships and shore bases including Glory during the Korean conflict. PTI for the FAA Field Gun Crew on six occasions between 1961-71. Fleet Air Arm Association. October 5. Aged 79.

Harold Prior. Leading Seaman. Gunner branch. Served in Ganges and Far East. Ships included Ladybird, Constance and Belfast (Korea). November 11. Aged 78.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Donald Short. AM(E) FAA. Served 1946-49 RNAS Donibristle (Merlin). Greater Manchester Fleet Air Arm Association. October 18 whilst on holiday in Spain and where the funeral took place with the Spanish RNA Standard being carried by an ex-member of the FAA. Aged 83.

Jeffery 'Dolly' Gray. Master at Arms. TS Arethusa boy aged 11 (before it moved from Greenhithe to Upnor). Served 1934-63. HMS Ganges (later returning as an RPO), survived the tragedy of HMS Dasher and later served in submarines P555, Oberon and Proteus; then as Master at Arms at HMS Pembroke and Chatham. Margate RNA, East Kent Submariners Association and the oldest member of T/S Arethusa Association. October 13. Aged 92.

Ron Farley. Served in the REME. Associate member of Henlow RNA. October 12. Aged 79.
John 'Johnny' Thomas Hogg. RM Colour Sergeant. Served WW2 mainly in Italy between 1943-45. Founding Vice Chairman and Vice President of Dursley & District RNA and became a Life Member in 2002. October 24.

Lt Edward George Smith RNRV. Served 1940-46 in Northern Sky, Dochet, Califf and Gleaner. Southern Ontario branch. July 9 in

Canada. Aged 93.

Leslie 'Les' Baker. CWEM. Boy Seaman in St George and served 1939-69; survived sinking of Barham 1941. Joined RN Commandos landing with Q Commando June 6 1944 at Jig Beach Gold close to Arromanches, Northern France. Post-war he returned to General Service and joined the newly formed electrical branch in 1947 serving in various ships then at Collingwood 1962 as an Instructor till end of Service. Norwich RNA September 25. Aged 88.

Fred Dearlove. Stoker 1st Class. Served 1943-47. Norwich branch. October 8. Aged 86.

Richard 'Richie' Earp BEM. Chief Mechanician. Served 1937-66 in Blackwood, Neptune and Londonderry. Member of HMS Newcastle Association and Founder member of Havant RNA. October 7. Aged 94.

Antony 'Tony' R Green. LMEM. Served 1954-66 in Ursa, Ausonia, Raleigh, Pembroke and St Angelo, Malta; submarine service 1962-66 at Dolphin, Onslaught and Astute. Life Member of the RNA attending Sevenoaks and Paddock Wood branches also a member of Medway Submariners Association. October 3. Aged 74.

Joyce Clark. Associate member Luton RNA. Wife of William 'Nobby' Clark. October 12. Aged 87.

James Swallow. Served as the Leading officer's cook on board Anson and later second cook at the Commander's residence Chatham. Hertford branch. November 4. Aged 84.

Ronald 'Ron' Edwin Barton. TAG. Served in the Far East during WW2 taking part in the Palamang raids. Bexhill on Sea RNA. October 7. Aged 86.

John 'Brad' Bradbury. Founder member of Southend Club and former treasurer also member of HMS Belfast Association. September 7. Aged 81.

Jack Swift. AB. Served 1943-46 on Malta convoys. Member and Standard Bearer of Selby RNA. October 30. Aged 86.

James Albert 'Bummie' Seddon. Able Seaman. Served 1954-62. Assistant Welfare Officer Nuneaton branch. September 26. Aged 74.

John 'Jack' Albert Southall. Served World War 2. Member and auditor Swaffham branch. September 13. Aged 85.

Richard Gordon Bannister. Stoker Mechanic 1st class. National Service 1947-49. Secretary of Derby RNA from 1996. Aged 82. October 10.

James Brewer. Chief Stoker. Served throughout WW2 and an Arctic convoy veteran. President of Bradford RNA. November 1. Aged 88.

HMS DUKE OF YORK ASSOCIATION
All members below were at the Japanese Surrender in Tokyo Bay on September 2 1945:

Sir Henry Leach. Served as Lt onboard 1943-45. April 26. Aged 87.

J D Evans. Served as Signalman onboard 1943-44. May 20. Aged 86.

N M Riddell. Served as Seaman onboard 1944-46. February 1. Aged 87.

C E Benstead. Served as Signalman onboard 1945-46. October 19. Aged 86.

B W Catling. Served as Joiner onboard 1941-45. May 15. Aged 90.

G W Cutler. Served as Seaman onboard 1941-45. October 15. Aged 92.

W E Hopkins. Served onboard as Stoker 1944-47. April 4. Aged 84.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
Lt Cdr F N O 'Nick' Bartlett. Submarine Service 1946-52 in Thorough, Truncheon, Totem and Andrew. Dolphin branch. Aged 89.

J R 'Jeff' Gray. PO LTO. Submarine Service 1943-44 in P555, Oberon 1 and Proteus. East Kent branch. Aged 92.

J A 'John' Kemp. Stc.Mech. Submarine Service 1951-54 in Alcide and Selene. Plymouth branch. Aged 81.

P D 'Lofly' Powell. M(E)1. Submarine Service 1961-69 in Narwhal. East Kent branch. Aged 72.

A 'Tony' Green. LME. Submarine Service 1960-66 in Onslaught and Astute. Medway Towns branch. Aged 74.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
E A Reed. Served LCF 9, 12, 13, 37 and 42. Ilford. June 9.

V C Wood. Served LCI and LCTs. East Peckham. July 22.

E E Spanton. Served LST 401. Kettering. September 19.

C E Berrett. Served LCI(L) 214, 386 and LCI(L) Flotilla 265. Bracknell. October 8.

Bill Robinson. Served LSI(S) Prinz Albert. Liverpool. November 6.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

Jack Dale. Stc.1. Served in Beaumaris. Associate member. October 8. Aged 87.

Fred Hitching. L/Wmn. Served in Fancy. October 30. Aged 88.

Phil Willis. Served in Lioness. October 11.

Sports lottery

October 22: £5,000 – PO K J McHugh; £1,500 – PO L T Searle; £500 – Capt G J Havis RM.
October 29: £5,000 – PO J A Henry; £1,500 – Mne D P Boswood; £500 – AB1 J A Screen.

November 5: £5,000 – Lt Cdr A Flynn; £1,500 – LH D Weston; £500 – AB2 J A Mulcahy.
November 12: £5,000 – AB1 C Jones; £1,500 – AB2 A Frankland; £500 – AB1 S Collins.

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Trophy lives



STUDENTS of the Royal Navy's battle honours may be aware that, although there have been only three ships named Sheffield, that name has had 13 honours awarded.

Of these no fewer than 12 were won by the first ship of the name, a Southampton-class light cruiser launched in 1936 and not finally broken up until 1967.

One of these is the Battle of North Cape, fought in the Arctic Ocean on December 26 1943.

After the successful midge submarine attack on the German battleship Tirpitz the *Kriegsmarine's* sole operational capital ship was the fast battleship (or battle-cruiser) Scharnhorst.

At that time the western allies were supporting Russia by convoys to Murmansk and Archangel while the Germans were mounting incessant attacks by the *Luftwaffe* and U-boats in an attempt to cut this supply line.

In December 1943 Norwegian agents and British intelligence indicated that a sortie by Scharnhorst might be likely and thus the escort of eastbound convoy JW55B was reinforced by the battleship Duke of York (Flagship of the CinC Home Fleet, Admiral Fraser), the cruiser Jamaica and a destroyer force.

Similarly, the returning convoy RA55A was given extra protection by Rear Admiral Burnett in the cruiser Belfast plus the cruisers Norfolk and Sheffield and further destroyers.

On Christmas Day RA55A was spotted by both a U-boat and a Dornier reconnaissance aircraft; the CinC of the *Kriegsmarine*, Grand Admiral Raeder, ordered Rear Admiral Bey to initiate Operation Ostfront, the attack on the eastbound convoy.

Scharnhorst sailed from Altenfjord (now called Altafjord) later that day and with five destroyers headed north into the Arctic Ocean.

Unbeknown to the Germans by 0830 on December 26 both Norfolk and Belfast had detected them on radar; their first awareness was less than an hour later when, joined by Sheffield, the cruisers attacked.

Scharnhorst's radar was damaged; she turned away and, at 30 knots, left the cruisers some 14¼ miles in her wake.

Shortly after a *Luftwaffe* aircraft reported sighting Duke of York while Admiral Burnett, having lost radar contact, placed his three ships between the convoy and Scharnhorst's last known position.

Shortly after midday Sheffield re-established radar contact and soon afterwards Burnett's ships opened fire at a range of 6½ miles, with both sides scoring several hits.

Realising that his chances of achieving a surprise attack on the convoy had been lost Admiral Bey ordered his

destroyers to return to their Altenfjord anchorage and planned to follow them; he knew he was being followed by the cruisers but knew nothing of the proximity of Duke of York and Jamaica.

Radar contact with Scharnhorst was established at 1617 by Duke of York – at a range of almost 26 miles – and 30 minutes later Belfast illuminated her with star shell at a distance of 11 miles.

Scharnhorst was caught unaware; her guns were trained fore and aft and two of her three main armament turrets were soon put out of action – nonetheless she managed to turn away and to open the range by maintaining a speed of 26 knots.

At 1824 a hit from Duke of York severed her main steam pipe and in spite of desperate attempts to repair the damage her speed fell to ten knots; this allowed British destroyers to attack with torpedoes and four hits were recorded.

Under attack by 13 ships, suffering repeated hits from gunfire and torpedoes and listing heavily, in her final moments Scharnhorst was surrounded by a huge smoke cloud which neither star shell nor searchlight could penetrate.

Kapitän Hintze had little alternative other than to order his crew to abandon ship and at 1945 a major explosion was heard – possibly a magazine exploding.

When the smoke lifted it was clear that Scharnhorst had been sunk; the U-boat threat prevented any prolonged effort to rescue her survivors and only 36 of her crew of 1968 were picked up – neither *Kapitän* Hintze nor Admiral Bey being amongst those rescued.

Later, on board Duke of York, Admiral Fraser told his officers: "Gentlemen, the battle against Scharnhorst has ended in victory for us."

"I hope that if any of you are ever called upon to lead a ship into action against an opponent many times superior, you will command your ship as gallantly as Scharnhorst was commanded today."

Trophy 26152, a model of the Duke of Wellington on horseback, was presented to the last HMS Sheffield (a Type 22 frigate) by her then affiliated Army Unit – the 3rd Battalion, the Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding) – in March 1995.

When that ship was sold to Chile in 2003 the affiliation between the Regiment and the Navy was transferred to HMS Iron Duke.

The 13th battle honour for Sheffield is the Falklands War of 1982 and was awarded to the Type 42 destroyer lost during that campaign.

And finally, the cruiser Belfast survives to this day as part of the Imperial War Museum, and is permanently moored on the River Thames opposite the Tower of London.

1971 1981 1991 2001 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● A welcoming paw-shake for Rebel from Flag Officer Spithead and Port Admiral Portsmouth

December 1971

ABLE Seaman Rebel proved to be no salty sea-dog as his adopted ship came home to Portsmouth.

The Arabian mountain goathound found the passage from the Gulf in HMS PuncHESTON rough going and was reported to have crawled away to hide whenever the weather took a turn for the worse.

As the 425-ton minesweeper faced a monsoon in the Indian Ocean, gales off the Cape and storm-force winds in the Bay of Biscay, it was a trying journey for the 18-month-old dog as he headed for his new life in the UK.

HMS PuncHESTON had spent 13 years on continuous foreign service, and was heading home to be paid off.

Rebel was due to spend six months in quarantine in Fife, before going to live with OEM James Hutchinson.

December 1981

RUSSIA'S newest destroyer, the 8,000-ton Udaloy, came into Royal Navy sights for the first time when HMS Torquay intercepted her in the North Sea, 120 miles south-west of Bergen.

Torquay was on passage to Portsmouth from a five-day visit to Glasgow when she was diverted to shadow the Soviet anti-submarine ship, reported to be leaving the Baltic.

HMS Torquay made several intelligence-gathering passes close to the Soviet destroyer, while in return the Soviet auxiliary tanker Berezina sent her helicopters up to fly close to the RN ship, which was in company with RFA Gold Rover.

After a day spent close to the Russians, Torquay went on her way to Portsmouth, leaving a Norwegian frigate to keep an eye on the Soviet ships.

December 1991

THE UNION Jack was lowered, the bugler played sunset, and the last Royal Marines at Eastney Barracks in Portsmouth marched away as their band played *Auld Lang Syne* and the Corps and Regimental Marches.

As they marched through the barrack gates, familiar to generations of RM recruits, a group of veterans clapped and shouted 'Well done, lads.'

Portsmouth had been an important base for the Royal Marines since 1775, when the first permanent garrison was established at Eastney. The city remained a major base up until the 1960s, when most of Portsmouth's Royal Marines moved to Lympstone and Poole.

The Eastney Barracks had been sold off by 1991, although an important RM presence remained at Eastney with the Royal Marines Museum, which was built in the old Officers' Mess.

December 2001

ROYAL NAVY and RFA ships which sank with the loss of thousands of lives were to be given greater protection against trophy-hunting divers.

The MOD announced tougher sanctions against anyone who disturbed or removed items from designated military wrecks. Sixteen wrecks in waters under UK jurisdiction were to be put under the protection of Controlled Sites, which were to include HMS Royal Oak and HMS Affray.

Five other sites, in international waters, were to be designated 'Protected Places' in which divers could look but not touch – these were to include the wrecks of HMS Hood, Repulse, and the Prince of Wales.



Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

There's a storm a'brewing...

FLIERS from 771 Naval Air Squadron plucked eight souls out of Falmouth Harbour as they geared up to deal with impending winter storms.

A Sea King and its crew from RNAS Culdrose used the relatively-sheltered waters of Falmouth Harbour to practise 'wet winching' (so called for fairly obvious reasons...) with volunteers taking to the bright red individual rafts, awaiting rescue from the Ace of Clubs squadron.

They were lifted out of the water in two 'sticks' of four apiece and ferried the short distance back to the air station to dry out and warm up.

After a summer of plucking ill-starred tourists from cliffs, beaches and the inshore waters of Cornwall, the Search and Rescuers are preparing to shift their focus to the expanses of the 'steep Atlantic' – 771's area of responsibility stretches some 200 nautical miles from their base at Culdrose into the Western Approaches.

So far this year the distinctive red and grey Sea Kings have been scrambled more than 220 times – from rushing road accident victims to hospital and helping stranded cliff walkers and climbers to assisting mariners in distress.

December and January are, understandably, the worst months for weather in the North Atlantic, as changes in pressure

systems conspire to produce towering seas and gale force winds on a regular basis.

On-duty aircrew from 771 are flying training sorties by day and night right now to be able to meet the demands of rescues like that of the crew of the yacht Andriette in July this year.

The yacht was pitching in appalling conditions and her crew had abandoned into a life raft but were successfully rescued despite the raft overturning, trapping the winchman.

"As we head into winter those types of weather conditions become the norm," says winchman CPO(Aircrewman) Dave Rigg.

"The public depend upon us being able to cope, and that is the reason that we train so hard. "A lot of the jobs over the summer period are as a result of the busy tourist season. As we move into winter the pace remains the same, but we see more rescues out to sea."



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Reporting from the Fleet





MARITIME RESERVES

Playground transformed by Calliope

A NORTH Tyneside school playground is in much better shape thanks to a team of volunteers from the Royal Naval Reserve.

The play area, at Woodlawn School in Monkseaton, had seen better days, and did little to inspire or encourage the school's pupils to look after it.

This prompted the school's communications coordinator, Michelle Harding – an AB at the Tyne's RNR Unit, HMS Calliope – to press-gang her shipmates into helping with the work.

More than ten of her colleagues eagerly accepted the challenge, and all gave up their weekend, equipped themselves with paint brushes, gardening tools and overalls, and totally transformed the appearance of the playground.

A plan had been devised for the new-look area, and together with the help of local shops and businesses – who donated flowers, plants and materials – the result was a play area that the students could really care about.

Head Teacher designate Simon Ripley was delighted with the hard work and commitment that the Maritime Reserves team had put into helping the school.

"We now have an area that the children can be justly proud of," he said.

"There are parts of the playground that were previously overrun with weeds that our students can now take responsibility for and look after as part of their on-going education.

"We are thrilled with the way the RNR took on this project."

Tyne RNR's CO Cdr Andy Collier was full of praise for his team: "Today's Royal Navy is all about team work and what better way to demonstrate this than our group of reservists from all ranks giving up their weekend freely and helping the community?"

"I am very proud of their initiative, team work and community spirit."



Sheryl's Italian job

ATTENTION was (quite rightly) focused on the warships of the Royal Navy which played their part in the protection of the people of Libya from former dictator Col Gaddafi.

But there was dark blue input in other vital areas, too – as demonstrated by a Naval

Reservist from the Nottingham unit HMS Sherwood.

Logistics specialist Sheryl Batty returned home after playing a key role supporting the UK element of the military intervention in Libya.

Sheryl (pictured above, with HMS Liverpool in the background) had been mobilised to the Joint Forces Logistics Site at Gioia del Colle in Italy, where she worked alongside regular Servicemen and women deployed in support of Operation Ellamy.

"Putting my Naval training into practice during a live operation was so rewarding," said AB Batty, from Sheffield, who joined the Royal Naval Reserve in 2009.

"It was great working in a joint

supply chain and seeing how all the UK Armed Forces work together."

AB Batty, who usually works with disabled children, quickly adapted to her military role and rose to the challenge of resupplying Royal Navy warships and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels within tight operational timescales.

"My role – arranging the delivery of food, engine parts, communications equipment and medical supplies – was completely different to my civilian job," she said.

"We needed to meet the RAF Hercules flights coming in and ensure that high-priority cargo was delivered to the ships before they sailed."

Cdr Martin Clegg, her Commanding Officer at HMS Sherwood, said: "I'm very proud of AB Batty's contribution to Operation Ellamy and immensely pleased at how much she has already achieved in the short period since joining the RNR."

In civilian life AB Batty works for Derbyshire County Council as a deputy unit manager of a short break care centre for children with disabilities.

The Royal Naval Reserve recruits people from all walks of life.

If you are looking for a new challenge, whether in logistics, force protection, intelligence or submarine operations, call HMS Sherwood on 0115 9296373.

Water course

RNR DIVERS raised more than £500 by combining two very Naval elements – water and field gun competition.

A team of four negotiated an underwater obstacle course created in the spirit of the Field Gun competition by the Underwater Film Studio in Basildon.

And not only did they raise funds for Help for Heroes – they also set a course record on their first run, though it was subsequently beaten over the weekend.

The RNR Diving Branch has a wide mix of experience, including recreational and technical divers, military and commercial divers and ex-RN clearance divers, with a roughly 50:50 split between the latter and direct-entry RNR.

The branch currently numbers 33 members, and is looking to get to full strength of 40 in the near future.

Badge 'goes home'

THE Wetherby Branch of the Royal Naval Association has presented the historic ship's badge of the former HMS Ceres to Ceres Division, Leeds.

The ship's badge, which used to be displayed outside the main gate of the former HMS Ceres in Wetherby, was discovered stored in a garage in a young offenders' institution, and was lovingly restored by veteran Richard Knight, who served at Ceres.

After restoration the ship's badge has been used as the

Bell finds new home in Leeds

A SHIP'S bell from HMS Ark Royal has been given a new home in the ship's affiliated city.

The Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) for Yorkshire and the Humber received a message from a retiring member telling them that a ship's bell had come to light following the takeover of Tetley's Brewery by Carlsberg and its subsequent closure.

During the decommissioning of the plant, workers came across a ship's bell with the engraving 'This bell was presented by the crew of HMS Ark Royal on occasion of their visit to Tetley's Brewery, 17 November 1989'.

Leeds has had a long and fond connection with the aircraft carrier, and there was no better place to re-home the bell than with Ceres Division, the RNR unit at Carlton Barracks in the city, which was refurbished and formally opened in 2005.

Lt Cdr David Noakes, Officer in Charge of Ceres Division, said: "It is an honour to have such a great symbol of Leeds in the unit and we will look after it well."

The history of the bell is not known with any certainty, but it is believed to have been one of a number kept for use at the top of the brow whilst the carrier was alongside, which was presented to the brewery in recognition of its strong links between the ship and the company.



Pete retires from Wildfire

HMS WILDFIRE has bid farewell to CPO Pete Crimmins, who retired from the Royal Naval Reserve after almost 30 years of service.

Pete (above) joined the RNR in 1980 at HMS Eaglet as a medical assistant, and rose through the ranks to make CPO in 1998.

Four years later he transferred to Wildfire, the RNR unit now based at Northwood in Middlesex, and took over as the unit's Coxswain.

Pete saw service in Iraq in 2003 with 34 Field Hospital, Royal Army Medical Corps, and after a short break in service he returned to Wildfire in 2006 in the Seaman Reserves branch.

As a qualified drill and ceremonial training officer, he took charge of parades at the Windsor Tattoo and the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

He has subsequently mobilised with the Fleet Protection Group RM, and last year was the head of the ship's protection team aboard RFA tanker Bayleaf in the Gulf – and his team won a prize for being the best in the Fleet.

On Pete's final training night at Wildfire, CO Cdr Ant Chapman presented him with a commemorative ship's plaque.



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Henry helps train Afghan officers

A ROYAL Navy Reservist from HMS Flying Fox who helped train members of the Afghan National Army (ANA) has received his Operational Service Medal.

Lt Henry Watts, from Bristol, normally works as a civil servant at Abbey Wood, where he is an engineering project manager in the maritime combat systems team.

But at the end of 2010 he was mobilised for six months as part of the Royal Navy's contribution to coalition operations in Afghanistan (pictured right).

His duties included watch-keeping, and also mentoring ANA officers working at the National Military Command Centre in Kabul.

A Naval Reservist for five years, and a trained amphibious warfare specialist, this was the first time Henry had been deployed as part of Operation Herrick.

"I was based in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Afghanistan headquarters in Kabul, which is the main operations hub, so the work tempo was high throughout my tour," said Henry.

"You get to meet people from all different nationalities and from across the three Services – it was an incredible experience."

Lt Watts was presented with his campaign medal in front of the whole unit by Capt Nigel Bassett, Captain of the Southern Region.



Cdr Sue Jameson, CO of Flying Fox, said: "The whole of the ship's company are extremely proud of Henry and glad he has returned having had some great experiences."

"This unit, and the RNR as a whole, continues to be busy supporting UK military operations worldwide."

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Widespread support

“... AND A big thank-you to all our supporters.”

It's a phrase we often hear from Sea Cadet units, and it is spoken from the heart – each unit is, after all, effectively an individual charity, and must raise thousands of pounds every year just to keep going.

But what does that support actually look like?

Well, rather like the photograph above, because that shows a small group of Teign Valley cadets with just a selection of the people and organisations who support the Devonshire unit.

Nick Maylam, Chairman of the unit's Trustees, gathered the great and the good of Teignmouth and surrounding areas at the unit's HQ, a large hall provided by the Principal of Teignmouth Community School, Tony Gray.

And the fact that there is such dedicated support is testament to the hard work and vision of the unit management committee, staff and supporters over a challenging four-year period, which saw the unit refocus itself while coping with an unexpected turnover in senior staff for health and personal reasons.

As part of that process the unit was effectively 'rebranded', with the name of the training ship changing from TS Teignmouth to TS Canonteign to reflect the local influence of the Pellew family.

Edward Pellew, a peer of Nelson, was the epitome of the dashing, fearless Royal Navy officer of the Napoleonic era, regularly taking on and soundly beating larger enemy ships.

At the end of the 18th century, while in Devonport, Pellew swam out to a merchantman which had run aground off the Hoe in heavy seas, and managed to rig a lifeline, saving almost the entire crew, for which he was created a baronet.

Pellew rose to be Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies, and subsequently Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Fleet – and with his successes came wealth.

During his rise to prominence (and the title of 1st Viscount Exmouth) he bought the Canonteign estate, the current incarnation of which is now a Devon tourist attraction.

Back to the present, and the Teign Valley unit has built a strong foundation for future activities.

The unit management committee is extensive, and includes a wide range of representatives of the community, from town and district councillors to veterans from the Royal Naval Association (Newton Abbot), Royal Marines Association



● Teign Valley unit president Sylvia Russell and OIC PPO Andy Mortimer with the Captain Sea Cadet's Commendation certificate, presented by the town's Deputy Mayor, Cllr James McMurray – recognition of the unit's "outstanding training and leadership"

(South Devon) and Royal British Legion (Teignmouth, Newton Abbot and Dawlish).

RNA members Frederick Wills and George Thornton said their branch supports the unit financially and socially, and as a result navy blue uniforms are a regular sight in the streets of the town.

“We are very proud of them here in Teignmouth,” said Frederick.

Former Naval Nurse Pat Daniel, once part of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) organisation, said: “I would do anything for these people – they are carrying

on where we leave off.

“I love these cadets – I came out of the Royal Navy in 1946. I served at Stonehouse, Haslar and Portland.

“I was at Portland and Minterne Magna picking up the pieces after D-Day, but I do feel we have got to support these children – they are our future.”

Unit president Sylvia Russell, a local councillor for more than 30 years, has been involved with Teign Valley unit since its inception.

She said she had seen the unit

come through some bad times, but that the future looked much brighter.

Sylvia acknowledged the solid support provided by the RNA, RBL and other organisations, including the local RAF Association, which she said is keen to back all uniformed youth organisations.

“Our cadets turn out for so many occasions – when they turn out for Remembrance events, everybody loves to see them,” she said.

“They are a credit to their community.”

Also at the unit HQ for the big picture were PC Rob Harvey and Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Colin Rider.

The pair support the cadets' harbour patrol initiative (see below) and Rob accompanied cadets and staff on some of their patrols – Colin is training to be able to do the same.

“The unit operates safety boats for events, and they are a visual deterrent as well, so it helps with crime,” said Rob.

“We really support them.”

County Councillor James McMurray, the Deputy Mayor of Teignmouth Town Council, said: “This is a very hands-on unit, which takes a very active role in the community.

“They do the town proud,

supporting our Remembrance service and other events.

“It's a really good experience for them, and everyone can see that they are doing things for people, not just doing drills.”

District councillor Dave Matthews, a member of the town's lifeboat crew, said that the unit was an example of the Big Society initiative, helping fellow citizens while gaining experience (and having fun) themselves.

Dave said the unit was quick to register support for the town's snow warden scheme, helping clear paths and pavements in extreme weather.

He added that the harbour patrol scheme, with its liveried vehicles and boats, was a high-profile undertaking which also served to make youngsters aware of the importance of – and dangers of – a busy commercial port.

“They can really get things done – there are huge amounts of opportunities,” said Dave.

“If I were a youngster I would love to be involved. I cannot think of anything more exciting to do.”

The unit has taken the lead in organising the town's Armed Forces Day celebrations, and also

created a flag deck with memorials in the grounds of the college where they are based.

The memorial stones were donated by local monumental masons and quarries.

These stones pay tribute to the townsmen who served at Trafalgar, including Master Mate James 'Jack' Sprat (or Spratt) of HMS Defiance, who led a boarding party by swimming to the French ship L'Aigle with a cutlass clamped in his teeth; when he reached L'Aigle he climbed the anchor chain and started to hack down the French ensign.

Another stone pays tribute to the Merchant Navy (below), including the fishing fleets which plied their trade from the port, while another stone marks the unit's links with the Pellew family.

The unit meets from 7-9pm on Mondays and Thursdays, and prospective recruits or volunteers should contact administrative officer Roger Dennis at canonteign@sky.com or trust secretary Caz Denning at Caz.Denning@letsco-operate.com – the unit's administration needs are sponsored by the Co-operative Southwest.

Practical help on the water

ONE of the fruits of Teign Valley's community drive is their participation in a harbour patrol scheme in Teignmouth.

The Harbour Master and Chief Executive of Teignmouth Harbour Commission is Cdr David Vaughan, who retired from the Royal Navy in 2008 with a CV that included command of HM submarines Sovereign, Triumph, Olympus and Osiris.

Cdr Vaughan regularly welcomed Sea Cadet units to his commands, and his father told him that one of the best jobs he had before he retired from the Navy was as a Sea Cadet liaison officer.

So Teign Valley was a known quantity to Cdr Vaughan when Nick Maylam, chairman of the unit's trustees, approached him.

“I had been liaising with Nick as we felt there must be something we could do whereby if the cadets are on the water they could be the eyes and ears of the Harbour Commission,” said Cdr Vaughan.

“We patrol on a regular basis

but can't be there 24 hours a day.

“We said to the unit that when you are out there training, if you are able to keep your eyes on other things, please do.”

The unit now patrols throughout the year, offering advice to other harbour users, helping launch and recover boats, and deterring crime by their presence.

“We are trying to make it not just training but a bit more relevant to the community.

“For us it's an additional resource which can be used; for the Sea Cadets it's a meaningful tasking which they can perform with minimal disruption.

“If that can also help people with their Duke of Edinburgh awards or with Corps qualifications, that is even better, to be honest.

“I think we are a bit of a pioneer. We are doing something that perhaps might be good for other units who could be affiliated to a port nearby.”

Unit OIC PPO (SCC) Andy Mortimer said: “We are there

to help and support other boat users, and to help the Harbour Commission keep the area safe for everyone.

“It can be very busy in the summer.

“The RNLI are doing training with us on how to maintain sea survival equipment – which is another message we can deliver to other boat users.

“Every time we go out with cadets we inform the Harbour Master we are out training, and ask if he requires any help from us.”

Nick added: “We have a memorandum of understanding with the Harbour Commission, and we operate under the control of the Harbour Master.

“When cadets are out in dinghies the unit is not doing harbour patrols because of supervision, but when they are transiting or getting about, we can help.

“We always have a designated safety boat, so the other one can be used as a patrol boat.”





Music bursary for Holly

LEADING Cadet Holly Frazer-Morris was invited to the National Service for Seafarers in Saint Paul's Cathedral, after which she received a music bursary from the Gosling Foundation.

Holly (above), of Sutton Coldfield unit, travelled down to London with her mother in the morning, and they made their way to HMS President in St Katherine's Dock where they were greeted by Lt Cdr Payne SCC, the Director of Music, and Capt Mark Windsor, Captain Sea Cadets.

After a buffet lunch at President, they took a cab to St Paul's Cathedral, where they had a brief time to look around and have her photograph taken alongside the tombs of Nelson and the Duke of Wellington.

The service started at 5pm, and was attended by the Princess Royal. With the Royal Marines Band Plymouth playing and a choir singing, there was a truly overwhelming and memorable sense of occasion.

After the service, Holly met the other two successful winners of a bursary, and was presented with a letter on behalf of Sir Donald Gosling by Admiral Nigel Essenhigh.

"I feel extremely privileged and lucky to be presented this opportunity; the money I have received will mean that I can continue to improve my musical skills in the violin and carry on doing something that I love," said Holly.

"With the start of my A level studies, I am being given more and more work and playing music gives me a welcome break from my studying.

"I can also use these musical skills within the Sea Cadets in a band, and I am extremely grateful to Sir Donald Gosling, and to all of the staff that made my day's experience so special."



● Ted Hill

Ted goes to Windsor

ST ALBANS unit instructor Ted Hill has collected his MBE from the Princess Royal at a ceremony in Windsor Castle.

Ted, who is currently chief Executive of Hillingdon Association for Voluntary Services, received the award for services to the voluntary sector in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and London.

He still finds time to fill the role of Training and Boats Officer at St Albans, specialising in teaching navigation to youngsters between the ages of ten and 18.

Earlier this year Ted took five Sea Cadets to Bermuda as part of the International Sea Cadet Exchange, as he was responsible for the UK/Bermuda element of the programme.



● SOUTHPORT again hosted more than 100 Sea Cadets for the annual National Sailing Regatta on the Marine Lake. With reasonable conditions, teenagers from all corners of the country competed for honours in a range of dinghies and on windsurfing boards. And it was the team from **Eastern Area** which took the main prize, though others did get a look-in for individual class honours – **North Western** took the overall **Open Bosun**, **Eastern** and **Southern** shared the overall **Open Pico**, **Eastern** took the overall **Junior Topper**, and **North Western** took the overall **Portsmouth Yardstick (PY) Class**. The overall **Windsurfing** prize was shared between **Eastern** and **Southern**

Methil visits RNLI crew

CADETS and staff from Methil and District unit paid a visit to the local RNLI station at Anstruther.

After touring the station they were shown all the equipment used by the crew – including the lifeboats – and met some of the crew in person.

"It's an amazing place – you don't realise how much training the lifeboat crews do," said JC Finlay Maguire.

We are really lucky to have them."

PO (SCC) Kevin Ralph said: "It is important we take the cadets to visit places such as the RNLI.

"They are an important part of our community.

"Getting the chance to see up

close some of the equipment and the history of the lifeboat station provides the cadets with a better insight into the role of the RNLI."

AC Kelly Anderson said: "It was a fantastic night. I have never been that close to a lifeboat before and they are really big.

"Our instructors finished the night off by getting fish and chips – they were delicious."

The unit has been busy raising funds to cover running costs – none busier than Mike Given, whose son is a cadet.

After months of hard training, Mike ran to the summit of Ben Nevis, completed the Great Glasgow Run the following week, and then capped it all by cycling from Glasgow to Edinburgh,

raising more than £600 in the process.

And following the success of a car boot sale earlier in the year, when around £400 was raised, the unit was due to hold another sale as *Navy News* went to press.

Guests bearing gifts

TWO special visitors were welcomed to the Training Ship Carron, the HQ of Stonehaven.

S/M Tom Oliver called in to present a cheque for £300 on behalf of the HMS Diana Association.

The money was raised at the Association reunion held in Torquay in September.

Going swimmingly

GRAMPIAN District held their final sports event of the calendar year – and hosts Stonehaven swept the board.

The unit won the Boys', Girls' and Juniors' trophies, so the overall prize was something of a formality, and it rounded off another year of achievement.

Academy gets £24.9m grant

THE Duke of York's Royal Military School in Dover has been given a capital grant of £24.9m from the Department for Education.

The 200-year-old full boarding school for boys and girls, formerly run by the MOD which now acts as a sponsor to the school, will use the grant to upgrade its boarding accommodation and teaching facilities.

The school was founded in London in 1803 as a military orphanage, moved to Kent in 1909 and since 2010 is an 'academy with military traditions'.

The other visitor was Martin Anderson, President of Stonehaven Round Table, who presented a cheque for £75 to the unit as their prize for being runners-up at the 2011 Stonehaven Hi-Jinks.

The two cheques were accepted by UMC chairman John Agnew and Hi-Jinks team organiser Heather Lawman.

Funds raised at dinner

THE Mayor of New Romney organised a dinner with the local unit to celebrate Trafalgar Day – and raise funds for good causes.

Cllr Roger Joynes put together a high-profile guest list for the event, hosted by **New Romney** and **District** unit aboard TS Veteran.

Guests included the Mayors of Hythe, Lydd, Tenterden and the Mayor's Chaplain Rev Jim Field, together with the President of the Sea Cadet Corps, Alderman Fred Wood-Brignall, and Chairman of the executive committee of the unit, Lt Cdr Don Davies.

The meal for the evening was prepared and served by the cadets.

The Mayor proposed the toast to Nelson, and the evening concluded with a raffle raising £170 which together with the proceeds of the evening will go to the Mayor's nominated charities Kent Air Ambulance, the Kent Autistic Trust and the Sea Cadets.

The Mayor said: "Although rarely commemorated today, Nelson's battle of Trafalgar in 1805 was a major event in our Naval history and to involve our young Sea Cadets will hopefully ensure that the event is never forgotten."

Former CO at Ruislip

MORE than 30 parents, staff, committee members and supporters attended a Trafalgar Night dinner hosted by **Ruislip** unit at the local Conservative Club.

The event was organised by Mess President PO (SCC) Paul Major, and the guest of honour was former unit CO Lt (SCC) Barrie Yorke RNR, who joined the Sea Cadets as a new recruit aged 12 at the Weston-super-Mare Unit in the 1950s before spending many years in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Four bluejackets and two Royal Marines cadets from the unit acted as waiters and waitresses for the evening.

A raffle raised more than £100 for unit funds.



● AC Luke Short and LC Dani Qais wait to greet Dannii Minogue

Meeting the Patron

SEA Cadets joined colleagues from the other Services on board HQS Wellington in London to celebrate singer and TV personality Dannii Minogue being presented with her honorary degree of Doctor of Media from Southampton Solent University in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the entertainment industry.

As patron of the educational charity CVQO, Dannii Minogue is a staunch supporter of the cadet forces in the UK and the opportunities offered to cadets.

Representing the Corps were AC Luke Short, of **City of London** unit, and LC Dani Qais, of **Haringey** unit.

Also present was POC Charlotte Robinson, who was a finalist and prizewinner at this year's Duke of Westminster Awards, an annual competition run by CVQO to reward outstanding cadets across

the UK.

Of being a patron for CVQO, Dannii said, "The biggest thing about CVQO is giving young people who want to further themselves a chance, and to provide mentors who want to help them along the way.

"That's been such a big part of my life – I've had great people around me to guide me, support me and teach me.

"It's incredible to see the enthusiasm from the cadets and to see how they develop throughout their time."

Also present at the event was Admiral the Right Honourable Lord West of Spithead, Chairman of CVQO and Chancellor of the university.

CVQO offers members of the youth and voluntary sector the chance to gain internationally recognised qualifications.



Elizabeth remembers them...

FROM the World War 1 trenches of Ypres to a recording studio back in the UK, for one Sea Cadet the remembrance period has been a particularly moving occasion.

Members of **Tunbridge Wells** unit visited the Menin Gate in Ypres and Tyne Cot cemetery at nearby Passchendaele in the summer, and while all found it a moving experience, one of them decided to do more.

15-year-old Elizabeth Mills returned home and wrote a song inspired by the *Ode to Remembrance* by Laurence Binyon.

The song – *We Will Remember Them (Peace Now)* – was posted on YouTube, and received such an

encouraging response (partly through the influence of Lt Cdr (SCC) Vanns RNR) that the song was recorded and produced properly (above).

As there is an affiliation between TS Brilliant and the Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge Royal British Legion, Elizabeth decided money raised should go to the Women's Section of the Legion, which celebrates its 90th anniversary this year.

From the raw YouTube to a smooth take for release, the CDs are on sale for £3 each (plus P&P) – contact pjstmill@aol.co.uk for details.

You can also hear the song on YouTube – www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oA0LXX8uMA – which has links to the iTunes version of the song.



● LMA Paddy Gallagher with his brother James on board HMS Vengeance

Families Day under the sea

FAMILY and friends of the crew of HMS Vengeance were given a rare opportunity to see their loved ones 'at the office' when they joined the nuclear submarine in Scottish waters.

Almost 60 guests scrambled on board the V-boat, and experienced a dive off the Isle of Arran and an hour at periscope depth.

One of the visitors was restaurant manager James Gallagher, whose younger brother Paddy is one of three medics on board Vengeance.

Their father Pat was a deep for more than 20 years, and older brother Danny's last patrol on Vengeance coincided with Paddy's time on board.

And the visit confirmed James' ambition to join the Senior Service himself – he is waiting for a date with the interview board.

CO Cdr Paul Blythe said: "It has been an absolute pleasure having family members and friends visit us while at sea."

"To my knowledge it is the first time that any such event has taken place, and that made it extra special for the crew."

Once the visitors had gone Vengeance prepared for a long transit to Nova Scotia in Canada and a visit to Georgia in the United States to offload her Trident missiles and before returning to Devonport for a refit.

Hindu appointment

A BRITISH Armed Forces Day has been staged at the Hindu Cultural Society in Middlesbrough, organised by the Hindu Chaplain to the Military, Krishan Attri.

Representatives from all three Armed Forces attended and gave presentations, while the centre laid on a display of dancing before hosts and visitors enjoyed lunch.



The blues linger on

IT MAY be December, but there are no red faces here, only blue ones.

Because HMS Sultan also threw itself into Blue September, and so we will unashamedly give them a plug even though the event and the aches and pains may be fading (though possibly not the blue face paint...)

The PT department at the Gosport engineering training establishment organised a Super Teams event to promote Blue September, a nationwide male cancer awareness campaign.

Under the initiative, awareness



● The Rev Tim Wilkinson (left), one of the chaplains at the Commando Training Centre, Lympstone, and CTC Chaplaincy verger Ian Evans in front of the former Deal chapel windows which have now been installed at the Church of St Alban at CTC

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RNPOTY x 3

Smashing windows

NOT all churches feel particularly 'churchy'.

The Church of St Alban at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) at Lympstone was one of them – but that has all changed now.

Not only is the church more welcoming, but the work of the Chaplaincy team has reached out to the wider Royal Marines community.

And the value of the three bishes to the Corps as a whole is recognised at the highest level of the establishment.

Lympstone has had a drop-in centre for some time, but the initiative really took off this year, coinciding with 3 Cdo Brigade's deployment to Afghanistan.

"We were trying to support the families while husbands were away on Herrick 14," said Zena Woodley, one of three Pastoral Workers funded by Aggie Weston's, often known as 'Aggies' after founder Dame Agnes Weston.

"We have coffee mornings for wives, partners, girlfriends, so they can drop in on Thursdays between

1000 and 1230 as they please."

As well as 20 or more people for regular get-togethers, Zena and co-workers Sally Jones and Nick Maylam arranged a fund-raising coffee and cakes morning for SSAFA Forces Help, raising £125 as well as attracting 30 or 40 family members and well over 100 staff and trainees from the base.

"Getting families, wives, girlfriends in here means other welfare groups can come along to offer other support and services, as well as giving the chaplains and pastoral workers a chance to build relationships," said Nick.

Close to the drop-in venue is the church that has become more 'churchy', all thanks to a clutch of disused windows.

"The windows were from the old Deal Barracks chapel," said Rev Tim Wilkinson, one of two Methodist padres at CTCRM.

"They have been spread around the chapels – Chivenor has some, for example.

"But these were the last five that hadn't been housed – they were in storage somewhere, over in Whale Island.

"The funding for the boxes, electrics and plastering to finish off came from the Naval Service Amenities Fund.

"The chapel here used to be a lot plainer.

"Lots of people have sat in it and said they love the windows because they make it feel special.

"The windows have made it feel quite churchy for some, and for the old and bold it brings back memories of Deal."

The five windows, which were installed in July, depict saints – from the left, they are St Augustine of Canterbury, St Thomas Becket, St George, St Hubert and St Martin of Tours, a patron saint of soldiers.

"Some of them are soldiers – St George and St Martin of Tours – and St Hubert was a hunter, so there are great stories behind them," said Tim.

"Those guys were really strong... St Thomas, for example, showed immense moral courage to stand up to King Henry II and fight for his principles.

"We use these stories to illustrate courage and unselfishness – elements of the Commando Spirit.

We do classes in the church where we unpack the idea of the four elements of the Commando Spirit.

"Every bootneck knows them – courage, determination,

unselfishness and cheerfulness in the face of adversity.

"We used to do these lessons in a classroom, but now we get them into small groups in the church, and we explore what those words mean in practice.

"It's great fun – we get each small group to do a little play to illustrate their thoughts.

"The classes are on belief and values in the Royal Marines – it is all about core (and Corps) values.

"What we say to the guys is, you can be the fittest person in the world, and great with the weapons, but if you haven't got a set of values that binds you together as a group then it is going to break apart as soon as it comes under pressure.

"These core values are crucial in their formation as Royal Marines.

"It is also the only congregation I know of where you can swear like a trooper and they don't bat an eyelid..."

The windows are backlit round the clock – the opening hours of the church – and they replace a wall which used to be adorned by a 'locally-produced mural' of the Lamb of God which, because of its distinctive appearance, became known on camp as the 'Holy Pig'.

The rear wall of the church is peppered with badges of the various King's Squads over the decades, on the back of which the successful commandos signed their names.

Special services are held at the church to mark the completion of

training for these men, and many return in subsequent years to find their own plaque and reminisce.

All three padres are commando trained – a reminder of their efforts lies on display in the Chaplaincy offices in the form of a weighted metal shepherd's crook, carried by padres on their Commando tests instead of a weapon.

Since the early 1990s the green-lidded bishes have had to make do with lead weights.

Brig Ged Salzano, the Commandant of CTCRM, is in no doubt as to the benefit of the chaplains' efforts.

"I'd argue that the chaplains' contribution to Phase 1 and 2 training is absolutely essential to the moral component," said Brig Salzano.

"Ethos, values, citizenship – they fulfil a very important function.

"I have chatted to chaplains at other establishments and they would like to see recruits come into the chapel more frequently for scheduled curriculum training along the Lympstone model.

"It also complements the Rules of Engagement and realities of war training encouraging culture and character to walk together.

"It is imperative that we maintain the current level of chaplain support to the FOST organisation."

And on the new additions to the Church of St Alban, the Commandant's verdict was: "Smashing windows..."

Virtually building a new fleet

UNIVERSITY students have been signed up to help make computer-simulation training in the Navy as realistic as possible.

Computer games and animation students will reproduce three-dimensional models of military hardware, such as ships, helicopters and submarines, which are embedded in simulators reflecting real combat situations.

The Forces regularly use off-the-shelf technology and virtual-reality environments to support training, but up-to-date models of its assets were needed.

Under an agreement signed with the University of Portsmouth, the Navy will formally commission work from final-year students at the School of Creative Technology.

Lt Alex Smith, of the Technology Based Training Unit, said: "With new developments in technology, Serious Games and simulators offer an increasingly realistic environment for military personnel to develop and hone their skills.

They can be used to train young recruits in many of the procedures they need prior to using the real equipment on board but in a 'safe to fail' environment."

Some of the work is already in use, including models of the new Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier and the Wildcat helicopter.

Lt Smith said the quality of the work being delivered by the students was "exceptional" and comparable to anything they could commission professionally.

"The student work we received under the initial brief far surpassed our expectations and prompted us to extend and formalise the collaboration.

"The arrangement works because the Navy receives an excellent product and the students experience working to a brief with a real-life client," said Lt Smith.

"It's a win-win situation." The signing was carried out by Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral Clive Johnstone and university Vice Chancellor Prof John Craven.

Mountain challenge

TWO Naval Reservists took part in a tri-Service expedition earlier this year which retraced the steps of one of the toughest wartime escape routes – *le Chemin de la Liberté*.

The Freedom Trail was used from 1939-44 by 3,000 Allied airmen (as well as thousands of freedom fighters and refugees) to escape occupied France, enabling them to rejoin the war effort.

The reservists, including AB Alison Draper and AB2 Gareth Shaw, took four days to cover the 72km route through the Pyrenees, tackling steep climbs, ravines of packed ice, boulder fields and overnight stops at 7,400ft.

Exercise Odyssey was the first expedition of its kind, planned and funded by the Ulysses Trust, a charity that provides financial assistance to UK reservists and cadets, enabling them to undertake challenging expeditions which help build character, promote teamwork and introduce new skills.

Snow on the cards again...



LAST winter's heavy snowfalls caused chaos, but they could also be a blessing to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

This image, and one of HMS Warrior 1860 similarly cloaked in snow, feature on the Dockyard's Christmas cards.

Last year's photo, which featured Nelson's flagship complete with snowy street lamp, proved so popular that 1,000 packs of the cards were sold.

So Dockyard bosses are hoping to repeat the trick with a different angle, a second ship and another blanket of snow.

Cards are on sale at the Historic Dockyard's visitor centre, and can be ordered over the phone by calling 023 9289 4550. Each pack of 10 costs £4.95, plus an extra £1.95 if ordered by phone.

Singeing Uncle Sam's beard

Day by day
Age by age
Page by page

NEXT year sees the bicentenary of the outbreak of the War of 1812, the last major conflict between Britain and the USA.

The Americans plan major commemorations which will no doubt emphasise their victories in single-ship actions early in the war, their successful battles on the lakes, the repulse of the attack on Baltimore – that gave them their national anthem – and the Battle of New Orleans celebrated in song and film (which tend to omit the unfortunate fact that it was fought after the peace treaty had been signed).

It will be important to emphasise, however, that this was a war the Americans lost, writes Professor Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

They achieved none of their objectives, notably their attempted conquest of Canada. They did not even force the British to give up their naval rights, whose assertion had helped lead to war. Britain succeeded in preserving the status quo that she was trying to defend.

Her main means of doing so was the imposition of a highly-effective blockade which totally undermined the US government's finances, a process reinforced by the burning of Washington that caused a major run on the American banks.

This process has been admirably analysed by Dr Brian Arthur first in his University of Greenwich PhD thesis and now in the resulting book, **How Britain Won the War of 1812; The Royal**

The Grove Review

Navy's Blockades of the United States 1812-1815 (Boydell Press £60, ISBN 978 1 84383 665 0).

Dr Arthur clearly explains how Admirals Sir John Warren and Sir Alexander Cochrane put in place a highly-effective and escalating blockade that not only prevented the US government raising revenue but led to the threatened secession of the New England states whose economies had been ruined by the war.

The great weakness of the American position was the total dependence of the US government's finances on customs duties. Although attempts to put pressure on Britain through trade embargoes had already seriously damaged American trade – in effect a remarkable exercise of cutting off one's nose to spite one's face (or as it was said at the time cutting one's toe nails by cutting off one's toes!) – the effect of the blockade was cataclysmic. US imports fell in value from almost \$80m in 1812 to \$13m in 1814 and customs revenues from \$13m to fewer than five.

The USA, with immature financial institutions, was faced with a burgeoning deficit with which it could not cope and therefore the Americans were forced to sue for peace.

The extent as well as the effectiveness of the British blockade was remarkable. Once the Royal Navy had made the

necessary dispositions, the US Navy – which had no ships of the line, was neutralised on the Eastern seaboard and British ships could move as they pleased, penetrating up the Delaware and into Chesapeake Bay.

Bases were obtained ashore, notably in Maine where the inhabitants were effectively placed under British protection. Indeed many Americans up and down the coast had little compunction in helping supply the British with both provisions and even intelligence. This was clearly an unpopular war.

The author takes great care to prove his points by meticulous economic and financial analysis. There are copious appendices and endnotes that take up just over a third of the 328-page book and it cannot be faulted in basic methodology, indeed it is truly a major achievement of scholarship.

There is, however, one very serious and surprising error that I am surprised neither Dr Arthur's supervisor nor his examiners picked up. The author confuses blockade with *guerre de course* – very different concepts. Both involve operations against merchantmen but the *guerre de course* is, by definition, the 'war of the chase', usually waged by the weaker power, on the high seas. It is certainly not the systematic interdiction of maritime trade by the dominant sea power such as that undertaken by the

British against both French and American shipping in this period. *Guerres des courses* generally do not work if suitable defensive precautions are taken; blockades do, if one commands the sea as the British did.

The Americans hoped to attack British trade through a *guerre de course* and, as no less a luminary than Mahan pointed out over a century ago in his rather-neglected study of this war, the British convoy system successfully defended British trade from raiders while American ships were being trapped, destroyed and taken in massively large numbers by British cruisers and flotilla backed by the presence of line of battleships.

Britain soon controlled the seas off the American coast and a United States still dependent on a maritime economy suffered decisive damage as a result, making defeat inevitable. It had been very ill-advised of the Madison administration to take on the global maritime super power whose naval strength was matched by its formidable financial muscle.

As the Americans celebrate their 'victories' in 2012-15 we need to bear this fundamental truth in mind. The Americans were indeed able to prevent Britain fully exploiting its victory by containing the USA and expanding British influence in North America but that was not the primary British war aim which

was merely to maintain things as they were.

Indeed, the war should never have taken place at all as the British had withdrawn their Orders in Council which had so alienated the Americans before news of this reached Washington.

The author points out that much of the criticism to which Admiral Warren has been subjected is based on misunderstanding. The limits the British commander placed on his early actions were a result of attempts to negotiate peace, not lack of effort.

Such an academically-sound book is perhaps bound to be expensive and this one is no exception. Such is its value, however, as a necessary antidote to American triumphalism and a necessary revision of earlier works on the subject that it ought to be published in a cheaper paperback edition as soon as possible, preferably amended with the above rather serious mistake expunged.

The book is also important as it demonstrates that there is more to sea power and maritime strategy than just ships and battles, a point that Professor Andrew Lambert makes in his excellent introduction.

There was also more to our victory in this war than merely burning President Madison's residence, forcing the Americans to paint it white to cover the scorch marks. The resulting 'White House' thus becomes a rather ironic icon of the fundamental strength in depth of our maritime and economic power at the opening of what would be Britain's century.



Revisiting the tragedy of Force K

WITH the 70th anniversary of one of the Navy's worst – and perhaps most overlooked – WW2 tragedies upon us, how appropriate that a second, much-expanded tribute to the men of Force K has appeared.

A few days before Christmas 1941, half a dozen ships, led by cruiser HMS Neptune, were dispatched to intercept a convoy carrying supplies for Rommel.

The ships ran into an uncharted minefield off Tripoli; Neptune hit four and sank while HMS Kandahar was fatally damaged by one as she moved in to pick up survivors.

In all 837 men lost their lives (including five pairs of brothers) – only one man was rescued from HMS Neptune after several days on a liferaft, while his shipmates died one-by-one.

The terrible fate of those 837 souls was told by Adrian St Clair back in 2005 in **Mediterranean Minefield**.

Six years later, a wealth of material has poured in the wake of the first edition permitting Mr St Clair – who lost his uncle in the disaster – to vastly revise the book (*HMS Neptune Association*, £20 ISBN 978-0-9550387-1-6).

The result is a volume one and a half times the size of the first edition.

Mediterranean Minefield is not a typical history of a naval engagement or of the ships, but a very human tribute to the men lost; there is a photograph (or photographs) of almost every man who died, plus often-harrowing tributes from their families or poignant last letters home.

Those vignettes and mini-biographies provide an excellent insight into the men of Force K, their lives and loves – and also dedication and bravery; LS 'Tommy' Turley, for example, had three times escaped from POW camps after the fall of France. He escaped via Spain and eventually reached Gibraltar.

He is one of just six Neptune men today buried in Tripoli.

How the lower deck was born

TODAY'S Senior Service likes to claim the Armada as its first battle honour and take inspiration from Nelson and his 'band of brothers'.

But really the modern Royal Navy owes many of its defining characteristics to the days of steam and iron, as Brian Lavery shows in the second book of his history of the lower decks.

His account of ratings began with *Royal Tars* which took the story up to 1850... precisely where *Able Seamen* (Conway, £25 ISBN 978-1-84486-140-8) begins.

Mr Lavery is (a) prolific – *Able Seamen* is one of half a dozen books he's produced in the past two years alone – and, more importantly, (b) first-rate.

And *Able Seamen*, which spans nearly a century of lower deck life up to the outbreak of WW2, follows the same excellent vein as its predecessor.

The first couple of decades covered by the book shaped not just the future RN, but many of the world's navies: the square collar and bell bottoms were introduced, the petty officer and leading seaman ranks created, industrialisation led to the need for increasingly skilled technical sailors, physical training became a part of the daily routine, the Naval Salute, and the White Ensign was formally adopted as the Fleet's standard flag.

Able Seamen covers every aspect of lower deck life you could possibly wish to dip into – life on board, pay, training, recruitment, discipline, sex (one area of Chatham 'enjoyed' "a most remarkable history of sin known in most parts of Greater Britain"), and, lest we forget, battle.

The post-Trafalgar/Waterloo era up to the Great War has come to be known as the age of *Pax Britannica*. In fact, in the 1860s the Navy was responding to around 20 pleas for intervention every year: gunboat diplomacy, tackling pirates or the slave trade.

And there was little *pax* in Africa throughout the latter half of the 19th Century – the Zulu

wars, the Sudan, the Boer War – while the last major intervention by naval brigades occurred at the turn of the 20th Century in the Boxer Rebellion in China.

By the time of the Boxer uprising, technology had transformed the Royal Navy totally from a world of sail and wooden walls to one of steel battleships capable of 18kts and with 12in guns.

Technology brought with it the increasing specialisation of the branches – which in turn meant growing differences. Rivalries and distinctions which persist today date back to the mid-Victorian era. Artificers in particular regarded themselves – and were regarded as – a different breed, stokers earned more than leading seamen, and the ship's police were universally unpopular (and often corrupt). "They lead useless, idle lives and seem to try to justify their existence by reporting men for petty trifles," one sailor fumed in the late 1870s.

The author paints a grim picture of the life of a stoker (although they did receive better pay and promotion prospects). By 1910 they outnumbered seamen (to the latter's chagrin), were generally looked down upon (there was the infamous 'on the knee' mutiny in Portsmouth's new barracks in 1906) and were proving difficult to recruit as the Dreadnought age saw a massive demand for stokers.

Enter George Falkner and Sons of Manchester who produced a colourful recruiting poster espousing the benefits of world travel with the Royal Navy – and depicting stokers in white uniforms striking dramatic poses in the boiler room. It seemed to do the trick...

Life in the battleships of the Grand Fleet was very different from the recruitment posters, however, as Winston Churchill acknowledged. Joining the Navy to see the world, instead the stokers and bluejackets saw nothing beyond the North Sea

and a few anchorages. There was nowhere on board for lower decks to relax, no recreation room, just cramped and unhealthy mess desks. Ratings, the First Lord of the Admiralty observed, endured a life of "pitiable discomfort".

Conditions in the castles of steel were, at least, healthier than in the new submarines. The early boats did little more than day run out of Portsmouth, but it was a hard life – there was no chance to wash or keep warm, the smell was foul and water and diesel permeated the food. Worse still, on the first boats there were no heads. 'Personal business' was carried to the upper deck on the casing, and a quick dive would swirl it away...

In addition to immense technological changes sweeping through the Navy at the beginning of the 20th Century, there were huge social changes rocking the world of the ratings; it came to be known as the 'lower deck movement' with newspapers lobbying – with varying degrees of success – for improved pay and benefits.

The chief moderniser on the social side of things appears to have been Churchill – not least expanding the opportunities for commissions from the lower deck; for nearly a century not a single rating was promoted to the exalted ranks of the officer corps which remained the preserve of "men trained in the traditions of the 'gentry'".

All of which quickly became academic as the Navy faced its first true test in 100 years when war broke out in 1914. For the men of the Grand Fleet, life at sea was hard, life in base at Scapa bleak and at Rosyth, home to the battle-cruisers, little better with only a couple of hours' leave granted ashore.

Such strict controls were soon relaxed – the Admiralty was competing with the Army for manpower and so began to offer improved terms of service: better prospects of promotion, more pay, discounted rail travel, duty-free

cigarettes at sea, more leave when alongside.

If such 'creature comforts' could lift morale, defeat in battle could rapidly dent spirits. Sailors returned in their scarred ships to Scapa Flow after Jutland unsure of the battle's outcome yet "quite confident" the Hun had been sent to the bottom.

Not so – the rumours going around the natural anchorage suggested otherwise – "that the honours were with the Germans and that we had suffered a moral defeat," one rating wrote. "It was beyond belief and we concluded that the news was German-inspired – but it did have a somewhat chilling effect on our self-confidence."

Despite the disappointment of Jutland, the Royal Navy would attain the greatest victory in its history with the surrender of the entire German Fleet in November 1918. The High Seas Fleet was interned at Scapa Flow, where the ships were inspected by Royal Navy teams. The Germans, they found, were unrepentant. "Some of the crew seem to be quite prepared to start building another navy with the object of BEATING us in the future," a perturbed Yeoman of Signals J E Attrill observed.

And that is a story for the concluding volume of this trilogy, *All Hands*, due out next spring. It's eagerly awaited in these offices.



CERTAIN dates in the annals of the Royal Navy instantly spring to mind.

October 21 1805 needs no explanation, the Glorious First of June 1794 speaks for itself, May 31 1916 was the chastening experience of Jutland, and maybe for WAFUs it's the Armistice Day attack in 1940 on Taranto.

But you don't need an exhaustive reference book for the big dates.

The real pleasure of the latest edition of **The Royal Navy Day by Day** (*The History Press*, £50, ISBN 978-0-7524-6177-9), by Lt Cdr Lawrie Phillips RNR, lies as much in long-forgotten details of modest successes and moderate failures as in the stunning victories and crushing defeats.

Take October 8, 1806, when the Navy launched the first known rocket bombardment in history, the port of Boulogne being the unhappy target.

Or February 8 1805, when the Curieux captured French privateer Dame Ernouf 60 miles off Barbados after "a sharp engagement."

Or March 8 1856, when the launch of gunboats Drake and Janus from the same slip in Pembroke Dockyard almost ended in disaster; Janus dragged the VIP staging with her and sponsor Mrs Mathias, her daughters and dockyard officials were hurled onto the slipway (Mrs Mathias suffered a broken collarbone and a touch of delirium).

Or July 4 1803, when Naiad's boats cut out French Privateers with a rich cargo of gems and wood in Brittany.

Or January 1 1653, when monthly pay for an able seaman was set at 24 shillings – where it remained for 144 years (now that's a pay freeze...)

Such vignettes are not the stuff of heroes, but they add the subtle colour and texture to the story of the Royal Navy, making the 800+ well-illustrated and unfussy pages of this much-revised and expanded tome the definitive account of five centuries of RN activities.

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Matt breaks Navy's three-decade duck

HISTORY was made at the Combined Services individual squash championships at Aldershot when Lt Matt Ellicott (FOST) claimed the men's open title by beating Flt Lt Damien May RAF (ex Capt RM) in a tense and gripping final, writes *Lt Cdr David Cooke*.

After losing the first game 6-11, Ellicott fought back to defeat his old adversary 3-1, a great achievement, particularly as his is the first Royal Navy name on this most prestigious trophy since the competition began in 1984 (*he's pictured above receiving it from Cdre David Langbridge, President RN Squash*).

In the U25 competition, Mne Nick Jezeph (RM Poole), who had only returned from deployment the previous day, cruised through to the semi-final stage, where he faced a very determined and in-form AET Stephen Wallace (Culdrose).

There was some exceptional squash played by both men, but Jezeph proved too strong for the Naval airman and won in three straight games.

In the final, he took on previous winner, L/Cpl Richard Jones (Army) and while Jones lost his calm at times, Jezeph kept his and eventually his patience, skill and energy saw him victorious – once again in three straight games.

Throughout the two days of squash, he was the only player in any of the categories, not to drop a game which was an outstanding achievement.

After presenting two of the four trophies to Senior Service players, Brig Ty Urch, President Army Squash, presented the veterans' and ladies' trophies to RAF players, leaving the home teams empty handed.

Overall a great result for Navy Squash and hearty congratulations to both Lt Ellicott and Mne Jezeph.

Meanwhile, this year's Inter Command championship was held at Temeraire, with four Commands taking part; Scotland was unable to field a team on this occasion.

On paper the Royal Marines and Naval Air looked favourites, but Plymouth had among their ranks RNSRA president Cdre David Langbridge (Abbey Wood) and Lt Ellicott.

The day produced a feast of good-quality squash: all four commands showed determination and enthusiasm and towards the middle of the afternoon two teams emerged as favourites – the Royal Marines and Plymouth.

In their encounter, however, there was a surprise defeat for Ellicott, which undoubtedly tipped the balance in the Royals' favour.

Indeed they emerged winners of that match, three games to one.

The Royals' team, a blend of youth and experience, never looked back after that and they eventually took the trophy for the third year in succession.

Plymouth were close runners up with NAC third and Portsmouth fourth.

On completion of the day's play, Cdre Langbridge presented the Robin Bawtree trophy to Sgt Richie Hall (Commando Logistic Regiment) and mementoes to the teams representing the Royal Marines and Plymouth.

Overall the competition was extremely enjoyable, competitive and played in the true spirit of the game.

Some you win, some you lose



Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

THE 2011-12 season is now well under way – and the opening fixtures have provided a mixed bag of results:

RN Ladies 2 Bridgwater Ladies 2

The RN Ladies took on Bridgwater Ladies at HMS Heron in a confident mood, having played them twice last season, the second of which saw the Navy win resoundingly, 5-0.

The RN dominated from the outset with some good passing and movement throughout the team.

The Navy were given a lot of time on the ball and they used this to their advantage to get forward and put the Bridgwater defence under pressure. However, on the 11th minute Bridgwater had their first attack of the game and with the RN keeper, LStd Angie Comrie, coming off her line to close the advancing Bridgwater No. 9, the latter squared the ball to allow her teammate to slot into an empty net.

A quick response saw LPT Nat Bavister pick up the ball on the left side and from her cross into the box, LS(CIS) Bex Waller equalised with a close-range header.

The momentum was clearly with the RN and in the 19th minute the RN won another corner. AB(WS) Nat 'Pat Butcher' Collier, who had come up from defence, headed the ball into the top corner. Two headed goals from the RN – a rarity! The RN continued to create chances but went in at half time 2-1 up.

Both sides came out strongly in the second half. A great ball from midfield put LPT Lucy McKenna through on goal but the Bridgwater keeper pulled off a great save. Bridgwater were soon on the attack again breaking down the left hand side. The low shot caught the RN keeper out and the ball found its way under her body and into the back of the net.

Sensing that the game was still there to be won, the RN continued to press forward at every opportunity.

The Navy continued to attack and a final corner saw McKenna unmarked but unfortunately her header went wide; her head in her hands said it all.

This was a changed RN side from the previous match due to player availability. The final score did not reflect the opportunities and in the end sloppy defending cost the sailors victory. However, there were some good performances throughout the team and a lot of positives can be taken from the match to take forward to the next fixture.

RN U23 3 Cambridge University 2

The U23 squad played their first competitive game of the season after a good effort in the Inter Command Competition at the end of September.

The Navy got off to a good start with a number of debutants and it wasn't long before the pressure paid off.

A clever ball from AB Dave McLoughlin (Vanguard) found LPT Ollie Perkins in space 25 yards from the Cambridge goal and he lobbed the University keeper with a perfectly-weighted ball after 10 minutes.

The sailors continued to move the ball well with AB Sam Scott (Collingwood) and ET Rob Hills (Portland) combining well in the centre of the park.

With both AB Adam Beckett (Dragon) and LPT Perkins continually causing the Cambridge defence problems, it wasn't long before a ball played into the opposition 18-yard box tempted the keeper to attempt a clearance and, having been adjudged to have unfairly challenged Perkins, a penalty was awarded. McLoughlin struck it with his usual venom and the RN took a 2-0 lead.

Cambridge started to get a degree of control in the middle of the park by employing a three-man central midfield and when

the RN left back was dispossessed in his own defensive third a great block from AET Sam Buckler (Culdrose) led to a corner which the Cambridge team duly tucked away from a quality set piece.

On the stroke of half time the opposition broke down the left and a hopeful ball to the far post was helped by a squally wind over the outstretched fingers of AB Craig Mulholland (Drake); the teams went in at the break even.

Cambridge came out with renewed vigour in the second half and took control of the game. Forced substitutions to ET Dan Jenkinson (Kent) and MNE Dave Pain (42 Cdo) meant a reshuffle at the back for the RN team and some heroic goalkeeping by ET Tommy Knowles (Talent) and last ditch clearances kept the scores equal.

In the 70th minute, with the students continuing to press, AET Danny Brookwell (Culdrose) set off on one of his trademark runs down the left flank and a clever delivery to the back stick caught the keeper off guard and forced the Cambridge defender to slice a clearance into his goal having deflected off his own player.

Pressure continued to mount and the RN were reduced to ten men when one of the full backs handled on his own goal line. The resulting penalty was put wide and the RN clung on to their 3-2 lead to claim the scalp of the University side for the first time in four seasons.

RN Seniors 0 Havant and Waterlooville 2

Having scrutinised the Inter Command Tournament for fresh talent, the new RN Senior management team of Lt Fraser Quirke (Temeraire) and CPO(PT) Paul Willetts (Collingwood) ran a two-day trial period in October for around 25 players previously not involved at this level to display their suitability for Service-level football. This culminated with a fixture against a strong Havant and Waterlooville FC select XI.

Led out for the first time by LPT Foxhall (Collingwood) at the Victory Stadium, accompanied by debutants, ET Jenkinson (Kent) and ET Paton (Collingwood), the Navy side readied themselves to face tough opposition. Havant and Waterlooville featured youngsters recently released by Arsenal, Millwall and West Ham. Additionally, the Ex Portsmouth, Stoke and Juventus player Vincent Pericard, appeared up front for the away team.

This was undoubtedly a tough ask of a Navy side in its first fixture of the year. On a perfect night for football, Havant and Waterlooville pressed the RN team from the start and in the tenth minute a sloppy Navy clearance fell to a HaW striker who turned and drove a rasping shot into the top-right-hand corner of the net, past LAET Emmerson's (Sultan) despairing dive.

Only resolute defence by the entire RN side kept the scoreline down, with skipper LPT Foxhall playing a pivotal role.

On the half-hour mark, the RN were starting to enjoy periods of possession but the visitors counter-attacked with lightning speed. Only a heroic last ditch tackle from ET Jenkinson prevented a Havant striker from scoring.

On the stroke of half time, and as a direct result of another devastating counter-attack from the visitors, a cross came in from the left which was clinically converted for a 2-0 lead.

Half-time tactical changes made the Navy more robust and less prone to the counter-attack. Indeed, in the 50th minute, Mne Mickey Husbands (CTCRM) broke away only to skew his shot wide.

Havant and Waterlooville remained dangerous and in the

60th minute they had a shot cleared off the line, the resultant shot hit the crossbar, with Cpl Carns frantically clearing the ball.

The Navy continued to probe, however: the hard-working LPT Young (Northwood) delivered a fine hard and low cross after a mazy dribble that was competently cleared by the resolute Havant and Waterlooville defence.

At this point the Navy were really testing their semi-professional counterparts. Minutes later LPT Young delivered a cross from the left, which Cpl Carns came close to scoring from as he headed towards the HaW goal.

The Navy's performance in the second period showed their resilience and determination. There was a very definite energy and desire shown by all 19 players who were included and the management team were justifiably proud at the end of the game.

They had used the entire squad and have reason to be highly optimistic going into a busy autumn period of County Cup and friendly fixtures.

RN Seniors 3 London FA 1

The RN Seniors entertained London FA in the first of their Southern Counties Cup matches at Victory Stadium.

In a strongly-contested match with some fine football played by both sides, London FA took the lead late in the first half from a defensive error.

It wasn't until mid-way through the second period that the Navy equalised when Mne Husbands stole the ball from the goalkeeper and tapped it into the net.

A further two RN goals came in the closing ten minutes, one each from Husbands and LPT Foxhall. The final result was a well deserved 3 - 1 win.

RN U19s 0 Surrey FA 4

The U19s took to the field against Surrey FA for their first fixture of the new season. A dry, warm and sunny afternoon at South Park FC in Reigate provided almost perfect conditions for the youth team to build on the excellent draw against their opponents this time last season.

Manager, WO2 Marty Wallace embarked on a new campaign, as usual, with an embryonic squad filled with some seasoned Dallas veterans and new faces.

Naming five debutants in the starting line-up, the RN started well, creating some early opportunities and were unlucky not to go ahead in the eighth minute after a good corner delivered by AET Danny Brookwell (Culdrose) which fell to striker Logs Dylan Wilde (Westminster); his shot was well saved by the Surrey keeper.

Unfortunately two minutes later, a slack clearance by the Navy defence was latched on to by a Surrey striker who rounded the keeper and calmly finished into an empty net.

Undeterred, the RN pressed forward at every opportunity, resulting in attempts by Wilde and Musn Dave Hedley (Collingwood) which were easily saved.

Brookwell provided an excellent cutting edge on the left, running at the Surrey defence whenever possible. Another jinking run resulted in him being brought down cynically just outside the box. The Surrey defender was given a yellow card. The resulting free kick was struck superbly by Logs Wilde but crashed against the crossbar; AB Sonny Barter (Kent) pounced on to the rebound only

to see his header tipped round the post.

The RN were the better side for the rest of the half but could not force the equaliser.

Buoyed by their first-half performance, the Navy were their own worst enemies at the start of the second half, giving the ball away cheaply in the left back area. The Surrey wide man won the ball, drove into the box and squared the ball for another easy finish.

Determined to make up for the mistake, the RN pressed again. Surrey were fortunate to scramble clear following a well-delivered corner on 50 minutes and their keeper came to the rescue when he saved well at the feet of Brookwell, who had broken through, one-on-one.

On the hour mark, Surrey began to dominate possession and after a good save by the Navy keeper and some sterling defending, the ball was given away cheaply deep in the RN half. The Surrey striker was put through, his effort was well saved but the rebound fell to his strike partner to again tap in with ease.

As the game headed in to the latter stages, the RN continued to work hard creating three half-chances, without troubling the Surrey keeper.

The final goal came on 81 minutes: Surrey delivered a near-post corner which was met on the volley and flew into the net.

The result aside, there were lots of positives to come from the game, as manager WO2 Marty Wallace said: "I'm very pleased with the effort put in by the whole squad. We are in a better state than this time 12 months ago when we went on to have a successful season."

"There are more players to come back when their programmes permit. If we cut out the basic mistakes we will be a handful for every team."

Spreading the 2012 word

FIELDING a barrage of questions from youngsters is one of the Navy's – and nation's – leading sportswomen: Lt Cdr Penny Clark.

The Olympic **yachtswoman** dropped in on Prince's Mead School in Winchester as part of the London 2012 'Get Set' initiative which aims to raise the profile of the games and sport in the nation's schools.

Lt Cdr Clark – when not sailing for sporting glory, a marine engineer officer – came tenth when she represented Great Britain at the Beijing Olympics in a single-handed Laser Radial.

Three years on and now she and partner Katrina Hughes are currently ranked No 1 in the world in the women's double-handed 470 Class.

The officer told pupils how she began sailing at the age of four, winning her first national title four years later.

Although she's a serving officer, the Royal Navy fully supports its small cluster of top-flight athletes, such as boxer Lucy O'Connor and gold-medal-winning rower Lt Peter Reed, so they can maintain a gruelling training regime and compete around the globe.

Lt Cdr Clark told youngsters: "I feel it's really important that we have dreams and strive to achieve them."

"It doesn't matter if you fall along the way; if a goal was easy you wouldn't want it, it wouldn't be special."

"Every year I get to race in America, Australia and all over Europe – where I meet amazing people."

"I couldn't have done all this without the Royal Navy, especially the captain who gave me my chance to go for the 2008 Olympics."

Prince's Mead recently became the first Hampshire prep school to join the Get Set education programme.

In the months running up to next summer's London 2012 games, pupils will take part in challenges to inspire them to develop their own sporting talents.

"Penny was truly inspirational," said headteacher Penelope Kirk.

"It's no mean feat to keep several hundred young children riveted – but that's exactly what she did."

Picture: LA(Phot) Jason Ballard, FRPU East



Another grand day out for Gromit



THE annual Army and Royal Artillery hunter trial was held at Larkhill on Salisbury Plain.

The trail is run over a course of fixed cross-country fences including hedges, water ditches, and drops, writes *Lt Sharon Brown*.

The previous course was subjected to several restrictions of use because it was on land of scientific interest.

The Army commissioned a new course built on land inside the existing race track which was opened last year. The RN Showjumping and Eventing Team sponsor a fence on the course and this is clearly flanked by 'Royal Navy' logos.

Unfortunately, Lt Cdr Victoria Sollitt, the team captain, took a tumble whilst jumping the day before and was unable to compete.

This meant Lt Sharon Brown was the only representative for the RN.

Since she bases her horses at a Royal Artillery saddle club near Portsmouth she persuaded Louise Green, the wife of Sgt Neil Green REME, to compete in the pairs class.

Sharon teamed up with Louise on her mare Valetta riding her own homebred 'Timba' aka Lord Shannoy.

The pairing who hadn't ridden together before had a good crack at the course and got

round with only a couple of jumping penalties; they've vowed to return next year more experienced.

A great performance in a class which saw a large proportion of the pairs eliminated or did not complete.

Sharon's main competitive entry was in the intermediate course run over a larger and more technically challenging track.

In this class she rode Gromit aka 'Hidden Meaning' who was recently very successful at the RAF Championships on the cross-country phase.

As ever Sharon's first challenge was keeping her mount calm at the start. The starter audibly instructed Sharon that she had 30 seconds to start and with that Gromit threw himself up in the air, obviously excited.... His tension grew in what seemed like the longest 30 seconds Sharon had ever experienced.

It was a battle with the highly spirited horse, but Sharon managed to enter the start box just in time to leave it under the starter's instruction to go!!! And they were off...

While Gromit flew the first two fences confidently and competently, Sharon could hear the commentator stating there was a loose

horse on the course and remained vigilant as she navigated towards the next few fences, but fortunately they did not meet the wayward animal.

The duo had a sticky moment at a very technical pair of logs which Gromit's athleticism certainly contributed to successfully jumping through.

After that they sailed through the rest of the course, lapping up the technical fences with ease. A large brush fence preceded the water complex and on exit was again another large brush fence... Gromit and Sharon took the complex with ease, the experience of both shining through.

They completed the course fast and clear – and thoroughly pleased with their performance. In a class of more than 80 competitors, they lifted the coveted military trophy – a fantastic Dewar's Scottish Whisky Trophy, a solid silver Scottish piper, very apt for Sharon's Scottish heritage.

Due to the trophy's value, it was retained for safe keeping by the Royal Artillery, but it will have the names of Lt Brown and Hidden Meaning engraved as 2011 winners: a fantastic result for the only RN rider in the class.

Feeling the need for speed

WEYMOUTH Speed Week, which incorporates the Inter-Services Speed Sailing Championships, is held every year to coincide with the equinox south-westerly gales.

After two years of uncooperative north easterlies, Paul Morris got very excited when he saw a 40-50kt forecast ten days before the event was due to start, writes *CPO Johnny 'F' Walker* – who's also pictured right racing across the bay.

This year the Royal Navy were well represented with a team of eight, including two newcomers, S/Lts Tim Wills and Alex Bailey, who traded their kites in for some proper sails.

Undaunted by the close proximity of seasoned speed sailors, they duly set off down the course still wearing kite surfing shorts over their wetsuits... until it was pointed out that such attire looked ridiculous and had no place in a sport where big balls count (and don't leave them on the beach).

The event started with light winds and sunshine. Most sailors took the opportunity to prepare their kit for Paul's Force 10 forecast later in the week... all except for Paul himself, who started amassing a pile of broken kit, when a mast left rigged up in the sun snapped.

In fact, his week had not started well at all, when half way from Bristol to Portland, he realised that there were several critical components missing from the top of his laden Mondeo – like his boards! Luckily they were still in his garage in Bristol and not strewn across the A37.

On the Sunday there was just enough wind to get Formula kit on the plane, and in a rare moment of brilliance (or a lucky gust depending on your point of view) Dave Strudwick was not only the fastest Service sailor but also the fastest overall windsurfer that day, beating an international field competing in the last leg of the Euro Speed Tour, with a run of 18.3kts over 500m in just 10kts of breeze.

With the best wind forecast for Monday, there was quite a rigging frenzy on the beach first thing in the morning.

Paul's Force 10 forecast didn't quite materialise but we did start in a solid Force 6 which gradually built throughout the day.

With falling tide and a veering wind, the chop built up later, so the morning leaders had to work



hard in the afternoon to hold their positions.

Despite a massive catapult, which resulted in a broken boom and a trip back in the rescue boat, Paul Morris was the fastest Forces sailor of the day with an impressive 31.1kts on a 7.6 metre sail.

Another performance worthy of mention was Gav Nicholson, who achieved a new personal best of 28.5kts in perfect conditions.

On Tuesday Paul's kit nightmares continued. While downhauling his trusty and slightly ancient 7.6m, the reinforced tack patch proved no match for his size 14 fists and parted at the seams.

Although there was nearly as much wind as the preceding day, the north-westerlies astern of the cold front that went through overnight were blowing a short, boneshaking chop straight down the course and so speeds were slightly down.

The Army's Dan Skudder brought a halt to the Navy team's initial domination on the first two days of competition, recording the best Service run of 29.5kts.

Wednesday started with a light northerly and a harbour course cunningly set in the wind shadow of the Dorset land mass, so getting a fully-powered 500m run was a shade tricky.

As morning turned to afternoon, the wind gradually backed, the race officer reverted to the shore course and the whole day's results were decided in one ten-minute squall.

Proving that lightning can strike twice, Dave Strudwick made the most of the conditions, and blew us away with a 28.7kt run.

Good supporting performances from the rest of the Navy team (Adrian Wallis, Johnny Walker) put the Navy in a very strong position for the team championships.

After a rest day on Thursday

due to lack of wind, the main focus on Friday was the Joint Services Speed Sailing Championship.

Going into the final day, Dave Strudwick was leading the standings, with Adrian Wallis and Dan Skudder in close contention.

Despite hours of trying, Dave and Adrian struggled to find gusts long enough to sustain maximum power down the whole length of the course and Dan Skudder came through to be crowned champion.

Although the Army were clear winners on the day, including an outstanding run of 25kts in just 15kts of wind from Simon White, earning him a pot for the best run of the day, the Navy maintained their overall lead and won the Inter-Services Speed Sailing Team Championships (fastest aggregate team speed over the week) with a couple of knots to spare.

...and bring silverware home from Spain

Continued from page 48

from LET Barry McCabe; from his own half he, beat one player, then another, passed the ball to Chris Belsten who took out the other two players with the return pass, to put McCabe through on goal. He feinted to go around the keeper and then lifted the ball over his head into the net.

Belsten added a third and, with Sultan by now playing the ball around, McCabe grabbed his second for a 4-1 win.

Cue champagne and the delights of Barcelona's nightlife...

You can't defi the elements

WHEN the RN Windsurfing team headed to Gruissan in the South of France to compete in the famous 'Defi Wind' they were well aware that the literal translation of *defi* is 'to take up the challenge'.

The challenge being for each 'Defier' windsurfer to run the gauntlet of the fierce Tramontana wind along a 40km course, writes *Capt Gerry Northwood*.

There is also a significant party agenda at the Defi. Not for nothing is the event viewed as the *enfant terrible* of the wonderful world of windsurfing, and the 11th birthday bash did not disappoint. And Gruissan is also the home of increasingly delightful Corbières wine. More of that later...

The Navy team consisted of Dave Strudwick, Adrian Wallis, Gerry Northwood, Johnny Walker, Gav Nicholson, Si Cave and Nic Dodd.

Travel to Gruissan on the Mediterranean coast of France at the foot of the gap between the Pyrenees and the Massif Central was by a combination of heavily-loaded (with windsurfing kit) vans.

The weather in Gruissan was as full-on miserable as any winter day on the English South Coast.

But then conditions started to improve. The Tramontana wind started to kick in, the rain cleared and along with some other British sailors who had arrived at the event early, I enjoyed a fabulous afternoon with a seven-metre sail sparring with the other sailors and getting to know the course.

The next day other members of the RN team started to arrive and the wind was howling. Most sailors had rigged 5½m sails or smaller: truly challenging conditions for slalom racing, especially when there are so many other boards on the water.

The 1,000-windsurfer-plus start line would be a huge challenge in conditions like this. A second day of acclimatisation was spent on the course. Now, if only the event could deliver winds such as this?

With the course set just off the beach and kept to a simple format, with buoys set ten kilometres

from the start line, each race was two laps or a total of 40 kilometres. It would undoubtedly require more endurance and grit than we were normally accustomed to in Course and Slalom racing.

The first event day produced enough wind and an opening ceremony was held which included a calypso band playing.

After the race brief finished there was a one hour countdown to the first start. Getting on to the water and out to the start line with more than 1,000 other windsurfers was a sight to behold. (See www.defiwind.com for video and an appreciation of what the start and the race looks like.)

For me it came with the added bonus of my mast break as I cleared the beach. Fortunately I was able to grab my next rig down and still make the start line, except that I was now on a smaller sail than I had planned for and the wind strength was less than convincing.

The first race was staged in winds that ranged between 12 and 20kts. Progress in some areas was slow and others fast. Big rigs were definitely an advantage and the fastest sailors probably took about an hour to complete the 40-kilometre course.

For the rest of us it was about 1h 40m. Adrian Wallis was the first placed Navy sailor followed by Si Cave, then me, Dave, Johnny, Gav and Nic – all placed in the top 500 and in Adrian's case, top 250.

Sadly for days two, three and four, the wind did not materialise and the event results were decided on the first and only race: a shame but a lack of wind is always a risk in windsurfing, even when the venue is known as one of the windiest spots on earth.

Of course, the time was put to good use, with recce of other windsurfing spots, and a very thorough survey of the local Corbières wines, some of which are delicious.

With the event over, including a superb final night party, we all turned for home and the long journey north. The van now usefully serving an alternative role as a wine carrier. And the weather during the journey home? I have never seen rain like it!

The team was supported at this event by the RN & RM Sports Lottery and RNSA.



Next month



SPORT



I'm a Bandie, get me out of here – RM musicians train the hard way



Swede dreams? Marines test fast new assault boat



Ace invaders – Lusty completes commando training

Plus

Now that's magic – at the controls of the Merlin simulator



● Maz attacks... Sultan's ET(ME) 'Maz' Maliszewski delivers a stunning left blow on his way to taking the eastern title

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, HMS Sultan

Sultan enter the big boys' arena

IT'S been a good few weeks for the **boxing fraternity** at HMS Sultan – but don't take our word for it, let the base's PO(PT) Daz 'The Hatchet' Hoare explain:

The Liquid and Envy nightclub in Portsmouth was the setting for a small piece of Sultan boxing history – the base's first win at a civilian fight night in 14 years.

Two Sultan fighters were listed on a 15-bout card: AET Stu Connell and LET Lawrence.

The former had fought for the RN the previous week at RAF Benson, losing a very close decision.

Connell's opponent, Williams from Waterlooville, stormed out in the opening 30 seconds, trying to land powerful blows.

The sailor weathered the storm taking a lot of shots on his gloves. After these early stages Connell used plenty of body movement and rolling, landing hooks to head and body.

In the second round, the AET caught his opponent with fantastic combinations, but the scores were still pretty tight as the third round opened. Williams came out of the blocks for 20 seconds then hit a wall; this was Connell's moment and he landed some great punches in and out of range. The AET was named the winner by a majority decision.

LET Lawrence was boxing for the last time for Sultan before moving into the Navy squad and wanted to sign off with a win. His opponent was Johnson from Portsmouth University – standing 6ft 6in.

In the opening round Lawrence struggled a little to get inside the long jab of Johnson. In the second, after taking some advice from the corner, the leading hand started to get into range with head-and-body then body-to-head combinations.

Lawrence was now working really hard and making his mark, moving in and out of

range throwing phase attacks.

The third round was going to be the one to decide the winner. Both fighters really called on their energy reserves, but it seemed Lawrence had another tank of fuel.

Some great punches in the final round – especially to the body – earned Lawrence a majority points win. Over the years at HMS Sultan he has been a great ambassador for boxing and we wish him all the best in the Navy squad.

What a great night for Sultan's boxing squad, who yet again mean business, not only winning on the military front but also now on the civilian circuit firmly putting our name on the boxing map.

A fortnight earlier at HMS Nelson, a team of mighty warriors from Sultan took part in the novice boxing championships – and emerged crowned Eastern Region and Scotland Champions.

In only his second contest and boxing only for just over a month, ET(ME) Weaver has come such a long way in such a short time. Taking the fight to his opponent Weaver was landing one-tuos with power and accuracy, he easily took the opening round.

The second started in much the same way until mid-way through the round when HMS Neptune's Green started to up his game and throw combinations, earning a share of the round.

In the final round Green really started to up the tempo, putting Weaver under pressure and giving him a standing eight count.

The Sultan man kept trying to raise his game, but finished losing on points. He has great potential and is now looking forward to getting back in the gym and coming good for the RN Champs.

Team captain ET(ME) 'Maz' Maliszewski started really brightly, landing combinations and gave his opponent a standing eight count from a left-right left hook combination.

In the second and third rounds, the

Sultan boxer kept the pressure on, keeping the points ticking over to win and take the Eastern Champion title – as well as best boxer of the night; two fantastic performances in three days sets him up nicely for the RN championships.

Tearing out of the blocks and laying siege to his opponent Duffell, ET(ME) Bain's barrage meant the referee was forced to give Duffell a standing eight count.

At the end of the first round Bain was instructed by his corner to relax a little and use a jab followed by uppercut – which he did to devastating effect. He waited, landed the blow and long range uppercut as his opponent came in, then subjected him to more heavy blows at will before the referee came to Duffell's rescue. He's definitely one to watch out for.

LAET Foster could not have picked a worst opponent: a southpaw who was very tall. The leading hand did not let this hinder him as he let some of his big right hands go.

Towards the end of the opening round, the leading AET was hit by some good shots, receiving a standing eight count.

In the second, Foster was struggling to get inside the long-range shots and got caught for a second time to be given another count, thus ending the bout. The Sultan man can take great heart from this bout and can work on the key areas in training. He will come back stronger and wiser next time around for the HMS Sultan dinner show.

When the points from the championships were tallied, Sultan were on 21, Nelson 13 and a joint Collingwood-Neptune team on seven.

It was a great night's work, planned for six months and executed with perfection. This was a fantastic effort from a special group of people. It takes a lot of courage to get through them ropes, as when the bell goes the coach takes a step back and the boxer a step forward into the unknown.

...and bring silverware home from Spain

HMS Sultan FC won the plate in an inter-continental **five-a-side** competition in Barcelona which drew teams from Oman, France, Brazil, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Kazakhstan, Spain and England among others, *writes LPT Chris Belsten*.

After an opening 1-0 win over a Brazilian side, the Sultans were brought down to earth by a 3-0 defeat to the other English side attending; in our eyes they were the best team in the competition, but lost in the quarter finals to eventual winners Midshire FC.

Our third game was a hard-

fought 0-0 draw against a Spanish side who had 'Pep Riena' in goal, so Sultan could not score for toffee...

In the final game of the group stages the Gosport team played a very fast and nimble Japanese side. Sultan struggled to keep up with the pace and lost 2-1 with LPT Chris Belsten scoring the Brits' goal.

The results placed the sailors in the plate competition and, after a bye to the quarter finals, they faced an Omani side.

Sultan were 2-0 up inside two minutes thanks to strikes from

LET Barry McCabe and ET Biddulph, but they then sat back and in true fashion the Omanis came back to 2-2, taking the game into extra time.

Sultan then put their foot on the gas in golden goal extra time. Shot after shot was saved by the Omani keeper, but thanks to passing and possession akin to Barcelona, LPT Belsten found himself on the edge of the box for the decisive strike into the bottom corner.

An end-to-end semi against a Spanish side ensued, with outstanding performances from

both keepers to prevent the match turning into a goal fest, with a rocket just 30 seconds from the final whistle from Belsten settling affairs.

Into the final – against English opposition – and Sultan were 1-0 up on three minutes thanks to ET Jason Biddulph.

A lack of concentration allowed the opposition to grab an equaliser to go in level at the break. Sultan were confident of winning if they could grab the next goal – which came courtesy of the strike of the tournament

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Surfers snatch victory from RAF

THE RN **surfing** team excelled in large swell conditions at Gwithian beach, North Cornwall, to win the 2011 Tri-Services Surfing Championships.

A single point stole the victory from reigning champions, the RAF Waveriders, *writes Rob Barber, NewquayActivityCentre.co.uk*.

It was a blustery November day that greeted the competitors for the 2011 Tri-Services championships.

With head-high waves for the first rounds, a growing swell forecast and wind and rain of biblical proportions already lashing down by first light, the scene was set for a dramatic match up.

The event was as much a battle against the elements for the hardy competitors as it was to defeat their rivals.

It was the Navy's turn to host the event and as Lt Julian 'Bungy' William's announced at the pre-event meeting: "It's time for everyone to zip up their man suits and dig in for a challenging day, one of the biggest swells of the year is due to hit the Cornish coast today, so be prepared for anything."

The hotly-contested longboarding division was the first to hit the water. Competitors enjoyed what were to prove the best conditions of the day: the high tide allowed the waves to be protected by Gwithian's cliffs from the strong south-westerly wind.

The RN's Paul Keenan impressed in the first heat and eventually proved too strong for his rivals with a good mix of progressive and traditional longboard style.

Fellow RM surfer Paul Stainsby landed the move of the round in heat two, a controlled floating re-entry that had the judges pushing their marks in to the 'excellent' range.

With the tide moving out and the swell increasing, the shortboard surfers, who were next up, had their work cut out.

The wind had created a fearsome current, pulling in a northerly direction across the beach. The 25-minute heats were a battle of endurance for the competitors, who had to constantly paddle in a southerly direction to maintain their position in front of the judges, as well as paddling against the solid, now nearly double overhead and continually building swell.

To add to the challenge, visibility was greatly reduced by horizontal rain. These were truly British surfing event conditions at their most testing.

Some surfers who mis-timed their paddle out between the thumping swells didn't get the chance to show their skills as the waves were too difficult to duck-dive through – it was that tough.

Army competitor Martin Smith worked hard through his shortboard heat but was battling against the conditions; he came up short on his wave count, getting only one scoring wave not two.

That became more and more common as the waves grew in size throughout the event.

It was the Navy's Dave Burr and the RAF's Blair Ralston who displayed the best shortboard performances though.

Burr showed some great wave selection, he took a clean powerful left hander, pulled in for a quick cover-up tube ride on take-off, followed by a nice turn off the top and a close-out re-entry. The standard had been set and would take some beating.

The ladies' division benefited from a bigger entry than previous years and plans are in place for it to become a ranking part of the event by 2012's Championship.

The RAF's Rebecca Nicholls took victory after taking the biggest waves in her heat, making the big 'elevator' drops consistently and displaying some controlled bottom turns.

With the tide at its lowest, the swell peaking and the wind gusting so hard that the judges and officials were physically gripping on to the judging tent to avoid it being blown in to the Atlantic, the scene was set for a dramatic conclusion to the event. The Navy and the RAF were close on points and the performance of the bodyboarders was to play a large part in the final team placings so the pressure was on.

The RAF's Kev Rouncefield rose to the occasion. He had the beach erupting in hoots and applause after his first wave, a well-timed inverted aerial. He backed this up with a solid air roll on his second scoring wave, taking a clear victory.

When the dust settled (and sand and tents and pretty much everything else that wasn't nailed down), the Navy's victories in the open division by Dave Burr and the longboard division by Paul Keenan, backed up by a solid second-place finish by Kyle Grace in the bodyboard division were the deciding factor in the title race in the RN's favour, just one point ahead of the RAF.